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AN
ACCOUNT
OF
THE CONTROVERSY
IN THE
FIRST PARISH IN CAMBRIDGE.

1827-1829.

PUBLISHED PURSUANT TO A VOTE OF THE CHURCH.

Boston:
T. R. MARVIN, PRINTER, 32, CONGRESS STREET.

.....
1829.

PAROCHIAL CONTROVERSY.

ABOUT three years since, there being an unusual attention to religion in the First Parish in Cambridge, meetings for religious purposes were held in the evening of a week day, as they had been, occasionally, in the parish for thirty years. At first they were held at a private dwelling house; but this not being sufficiently large to accommodate them, they were soon after transferred to the court house. A lecture was also opened at the meeting house on Sabbath evening. Both these exercises have been continued, with occasional intermissions, ever since. These and other facts, pertaining to the interior state of the Church and Society, are presented by the Pastor in his correspondence with the Committee of the Parish. There also is given an exposition of the subject of his exchanges with neighboring ministers, and of his gradual discontinuance of exchanges with ministers, who avowed "liberal principles," as they are called,—principles, which are at variance with those of the pastor and church of Cambridge. Almost all the ministers who were in the neighboring churches at the time of the settlement of the present pastor in Cambridge, having rested from their labors, and those who succeeded them having generally avowed, or given reason to believe they had embraced, the liberal principles; such discontinuance of exchanges had become general, but without animosity, or denunciation.* The reason of the discontinuance was doubtless well understood, and by judicious ministers, of the two different denominations referred to, it was declared to be a good and sufficient reason.

* Ministers of the liberal principles, about this time, associated, by the name of "The Unitarian Association."

The first notice of dissatisfaction with the ministry, or of disaffection to the minister of the parish, was expressed in a memorial, signed by a considerable number of the parishioners, dated July 9, 1827, and presented to the pastor on the 20th of the same month. That the excitement which induced this measure was very recent, appears from the memorial itself.

"The order, peace, and harmony," say the memorialists, "with which your church and society have walked together for the long period of thirty five years, are matter of grateful recollection to those of your subscribers, who have, from your introduction to them until the present time, listened to your instructions, and are alike honorable to you, and to those who have attended your ministrations at the altar. Your memorialists feel that this state of things is giving way to disaffection and disunion." In the conclusion of the memorial, they say, "the subscribers, impelled by duty, and influenced by the desire of promoting the happiness and the best interests of you and your parishioners, join in recommending to you a return to that liberal system of professional exchanges, which you formerly practised, and in requesting you to exchange a reasonable proportion of the time with such respectable clergymen of liberal sentiments in this vicinity, as have heretofore been admitted into your pulpit, and with others of similar character."*

To this memorial the pastor on the 27th of July, gave the following answer.

Brethren and Friends,

I have attended to your memorial with the thought and care, which my regard to its subscribers and the importance of the subject required; and "for this cause have bowed my knees to God" for light and guidance. Conscious of having sought the peace, as well as the religious improvement and salvation of the church and people of my pastoral charge during a ministry of thirty five years, and equally conscious that there is no change either in my desire or aim still to promote their peace and welfare, I could not but be concerned at an occurrence which seemed to have an unfavorable aspect upon both. On receiving the first notice of the circulation of a memorial, I thought, and still think, that an interview with your pastor, before any paper had been drawn up and names solicited for it, would have been more favorable to truth and peace. It might have prevented one mistake, at least, in your memorial, which, with the remark subjoined to it, is adapted to excite an unkindly influence. The passage I refer to, is what, you say, "was sometime since heard by you with regret," concerning my "determination not to permit the introduction of men of liberal religious sentiments to my pulpit." Such a determination I never uttered; and the remark subjoined,

* The papers and documents are of too great length to be published here, entire; but nothing that has an important bearing upon the case, on either side of the question, is intentionally omitted.

concerning the light in which such ministers "were henceforth to be considered," I never made.

If the object of the memorial is, to introduce principles greatly at variance with those of your own minister into the ministrations of the sanctuary, you will indulge me in candidly presenting to you the difficulties and dangers, that would be apprehended from so diversified and indefinite a course of public service.

There are ministers designated as liberal, who are decidedly of the opinion, that an exchange with ministers of the original principles of the New England churches is not advisable.

Such exchanges have been sometimes found unacceptable and injurious. Exception has been taken to a discourse, delivered by a minister of preeminent character for theological learning and talents, orthodoxy and charity, on an exchange with a minister denominated liberal; and the preacher has been interrogated upon the subject in the broad aisle, before he had left the church in which he had performed the service.

Ministers and churches denominated liberal, no less than those of most other denominations, appear to consider it neither useful nor expedient, to have very diverse and opposite doctrines delivered to those who compose their stated religious assemblies. The subject of ministerial intercourse is believed to be uniformly left to the discretion of the pastors, who are, or ought to be, the best judges of what is profitable for their hearers, and who, as having a high personal responsibility, are bound religiously to determine what is right and consistent for themselves.

Precedents, whether in civil or ecclesiastical concerns, are no farther obligatory, than the cases and circumstances are the same, or so similar as to present a fair evidence of an obligation to regard them. The religious principles now avowed by many churches and ministers, it is well known, are essentially, or very widely, different from those which were held by the same churches and their ministers thirty years ago; and this difference has become more strikingly apparent within the last few years.

Ministers and churches of both these descriptions may believe, that an interchange of public services, where the principles are known, or believed, to be greatly at variance, would be generally unprofitable, often dangerous, and, not unfrequently, injurious. The pulpit, it might be feared, would become a place of controversy, or of such diversity of doctrine, as would tend to produce either skepticism, or an indifference to all religion.

The responsibility of a minister extends to his entire ministry. Men of the legal profession know it to be a maxim in Law, "He that does by another, does by himself." It is alike true in the Gospel. Were a Christian minister to be knowingly and willingly instrumental to the introduction of religious principles which he believes to be dangerous to the souls of his people;—should any thus perish by his means, their blood would be required at his hand.

The principles upon which *this* church and congregation were originally settled, and which have been uniformly maintained, are essentially the same as those of the first churches of New England; and these are the principles which I held and taught at the time of my settlement here, and which I have never found reason to alter.

With these views and convictions of truth and duty, I persuade myself that you will consider my Reply with the same candor with which I endeavored to consider your Memorial; and that you will allow your minister the same liberty of conscience, which he allows you. This persuasion you authorize me to feel, by the respectful, kind, and friendly style and manner of your address, and by the assurance you give me, that you "disclaim any right or wish to dictate to me in regard to my own religious sentiments," and that you are "actuated by friendly, affectionate and Christian regard" to me, and "should be most unwilling to wound my sensibility, or to interfere with my convictions of duty, or rights of conscience."

This first adverse occurrence, of serious moment, in my ministry, reminds me of my Ordination vows. These "vows are upon me;" and it will be my endeavor to perform them. It will be my desire and aim to "love the truth and peace," and to be assiduous to preserve both among the people of my pastoral care; to "speak the truth in love," and to prove myself faithful to my divine Master: "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

I am, Brethren and Friends,

Your affectionate pastor,

A. HOLMES.

Cambridge, July 27, 1827.

A reply to the preceding answer was sent to the pastor, voted by the memorialists, and signed by a committee of their appointment on the 2d of October, 1827.

The memorialists express their "doubt and dissatisfaction" with the answer of the pastor to their memorial to be such, as "renders it expedient that we state to you clearly and fully our doubts and objections, that you may understand our views and intentions, and have a fair opportunity to remove those doubts, and answer those objections." And now, for the first time, a wide and important difference between the religious principles of the pastor and of many of his parishioners is distinctly declared, and the wish and aim of the memorialists to have *their* religious principles introduced into his pulpit. "It is undoubtedly true," they affirm, "that there is a difference between you, Sir, and a majority of your parishioners, in some important religious theories, and this difference, in a great degree, is coeval with your ordination in this parish.* It

* How such a difference, never before heard of by the pastor or the oldest of his parishioners, is consistent with the unequivocal testimony given in the first memorial to "the order, peace and harmony with which your church and society have walked together for the long period of thirty five years," as "matter of grateful recollection to those of your subscribers, who have from the time of your introduction to them until the present time listened to your

appears to us extremely improbable, that this difference in theory will be diminished, as we have heard you, and those who agree with you, or who appear to be approved by you, advocate the theories, to which we are opposed, without feeling the least inclination to alter our own religious opinions, relating to the subjects on which we differ. Great and numerous disadvantages, in a moral and religious view, must result from a decided difference and constant conflict of theory between a preacher and his hearers. When parishioners assemble for public worship, if there be a great conflict of principle between them and their preacher, devotion is prevented, or interrupted, and their minds are less engaged in devotional exercises, than in efforts to support their own theories and to disprove those which they hear from the pulpit. If the preacher and his auditors are much opposed to each other in their theology, they cannot harmonize with him in public worship, while he is constantly delivering and laboring to establish opinions which they fully believe to be contradictory to reason or revelation, or to one another, and their minds are gradually alienated from him, and they either neglect attendance on the public exercises of religion, or seek some other moral and religious instructor, with whom they find it practicable to agree." . . .

"The difference between some of your religious theories and those of the memorialists, is real, sincere, and deep-rooted; it has existed many years; and there is the highest probability, that it will continue, and great reason, from present appearances to believe, that, instead of diminishing, it will increase, especially, if your theories and practice hereafter should be more rigid, than they were the first thirty years of your ministry here." . . .

Liberty of conscience is here strenuously insisted upon by the memorialists, and the exercise of that liberty by the pastor, in this diversity of principles, it is contended, ought not to interfere with that of his parishioners. They say, in conclusion: "however great the differences between you and us in moral and religious theories, we have a perfect confidence in the rectitude of your intentions.

instructions," &c. is not perceived. Had such a difference been coeval with the pastor's settlement in this parish, it would seem strange that he continued here for a single year; and even his settlement, singularly harmonious as it was, would appear unaccountable.

We hope, Sir, that your further examination of the subjects above submitted to you, will produce in your mind the conviction, that our request is right, and that your conforming to it will subserve the greatest good."

To this communication the pastor on the 17th of November, made the following reply.

Brethren and Friends,

In my reply to your first memorial, I am not conscious of having given occasion for the remarks and strictures in your second. Whatever may be the present difference, between me and a part of my parishioners, "in some important religious theories," I am at a loss to conjecture, on what ground you allege, that "this difference in a great degree is coeval with my ordination in this parish." The church and society, with the knowledge of my religious principles, were remarkably unanimous in inviting me to become their minister. It was this unanimity, which more clearly than any thing else, indicated to me my duty to accept the invitation. It was this which encouraged me to undertake the difficult and laborious work of the ministry in this place; and the remembrance of this unanimity at that time, and an uncommon degree of it in continuance, with correspondent tokens of affection, have constantly lightened its labors, and encouraged me in the performance of its duties. Although my religious principles have been uniformly retained and expressed, from the time of my settlement to this day, there has been no expression to me of dissatisfaction with them, until the reception of your Memorial. Had there been any considerable change in my own principles, or had I manifested a desire and aim, to have very different principles introduced into the pulpit; those members of the Church and Society who held to the principles upon which I was settled, would have had just cause to complain, that I had departed from the terms virtually implied in the contract at my settlement. If the memorial had shown, that there has been no considerable change, in the religious principles of the pastors of the churches with whom we have been associated, compared with those of their predecessors thirty years ago, it might have been of weight; but since this change is known to be so great, as to form another denomination in distinction from the former—a distinction which is becoming more and more apparent—the case is essentially altered. If it had shown that the ministers of our denomination, who preach in our pulpit, have "altered their theological theories at least as much as the clergy usually denominated liberal have theirs," it might have had a bearing on the case; but, as this is not attempted to be shown, but merely an opinion given, that "the clergy of our denomination" have thus altered their theories, this opinion affects not the argument.

It were needless to discuss here "the rights of conscience," since neither of us deny them. Were I conscious of having ever denied or attempted to abridge those rights, I might perceive the pertinency of what is urged upon that subject. It is more to the purpose, to proceed to the consideration of the Memorial, which I had supposed to be answered without ambiguity—if just conclusions had been drawn by

the Memorialists from plain and perspicuous premises. By your last communication it appears, that you "are desirous of hearing those subjects and theories" upon which ministers "differ from one another," "fully and dispassionately discussed, that you may know the whole of those subjects, and all the facts and arguments relating thereto, and may consider them fully, before making your ultimate decision." Were the object of the memorial, as thus distinctly stated, to be kept in view in the exchanges of ministers who differ from each other in religious principles, it would be incumbent on us, instead of considering how nearly we *agree*, to consider how widely we *differ* on some important subjects; and not merely to acquiesce in the preaching of doctrines very different from our own, but to request, or advise, that very course of preaching. Now against the utility or safety of such diversity of preaching, in the same pulpit, not only do the reasons which I have already presented to you, remain in full force in my own view, but they are decisive in the view of some, at least, of those ministers denominated liberal, whom you and I respect and esteem. I observed to you, that there are ministers of that denomination, who are decidedly of the opinion that exchanges, where there is so great a difference in religious sentiments, are not advisable. I now say farther that there are ministers of that description, whose declared judgment is, that a minister *ought not* to bring forward in another's pulpit, doctrines known to be at variance with those statedly delivered there by the pastor of the church. The principle therefore upon which the memorial is grounded, would alike embarrass your own minister, and some of that class of ministers with whom, upon your principle, you would desire an exchange.

Were I to make the proposed exchanges on the principle of the memorial, with a mutual understanding, that the doctrines which I neither preach nor believe are desired or expected to be preached on such occasions; you will readily perceive, that I should not only deviate from the common and most approved usages of ministers and churches of all denominations, but disregard the very reasons, which I before assigned to you, as satisfactory to ministers of very different theological principles, against such exchanges. For those reasons and others, omitted here, I must refer you to my former answer. The reasons are in my mind conclusive, and they appear to have weight in yours. "Great," you observe, "and numerous disadvantages, must result from a decided difference and constant conflict between a preacher and his hearers. Devotion is prevented or interrupted, and their minds are less engaged in devotional exercises, than in efforts to support their own theories and to disprove those which they hear from the pulpit." Would not such disadvantages and many others result from a continual conflict between the stated pastor and those who should preach in his pulpit? I firmly believe they would;—and from the regard which you have been pleased to express for my convictions of duty, and rights of conscience, I presume you will neither ask nor expect me to do what neither my judgment will approve, nor my conscience allow.

With your rights of conscience, brethren and friends, I have never meant nor do I mean to interfere. You well know that far from dictating to my hearers what they must believe, I merely present to

them, what I believe to be scriptural truths, inculcating it upon them, to search the Scriptures for themselves, to compare what is preached with the Word of God, and "to be ready to give an answer to every one that asketh a reason" of their faith and hope. As this is the duty of every *hearer* so it is the duty of every *preacher* of the Word. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." A minister of the Gospel is solemnly bound to study the Scriptures diligently, to expound them clearly, and to apply them faithfully, "as of the ability which God giveth, commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." This has been, and by the grace of God shall be my aim in "this ministry." The apostolical precept is binding upon me and upon every minister of Christ: "Take heed to thyself, and to thy doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." By any other course, I could not reasonably expect to save *either*. As therefore I regard your salvation, or my own, I must observe this precept. "Necessity is laid upon me, yea wo is unto me if I preach not the gospel" according to my understanding of it. Nor does my responsibility stop here. It extends to the ministrations performed in my place, through my voluntary agency.

Believing therefore, as I do believe, that neither the unity and peace, nor the moral and religious interests of the church and society, would be promoted by the proposed diversity of preaching, but on the contrary the most unhappy divisions and the most injurious effects to the present and probably to future generations, I cannot, either as your minister, or as your friend, be accessory to it. As far as it is consistent with "holding faith and a good conscience," I would become "all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." If I seem to disregard the wishes or the taste of my hearers, it is because I am more desirous to *save* than to please them. Nor can I ever forget the solemn declaration of an apostle—indelibly impressed upon my mind in the text, and by the discourse upon it at my ordination, "For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ."

Gratefully remembering the assurance you have given me, that you "should be most unwilling to interfere with my convictions of duty," I persuade myself that on mature reflection, you will ask of me no greater pledge than that which I gave to this church and people when they were committed to my pastoral care. *This* I am ready to renew, and do now renew, as in the presence of God, to whom I must soon give an account of my ministry.

"Commending you to God and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up," and praying that we may mutually endeavor to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, I am, brethren and friends,

Your friend and servant in the gospel,

A. HOLMES.

Cambridge, Nov. 17, 1827.

The first meeting of the parish in relation to this subject was holden on the 7th of January, 1828, when the following votes were passed:

1. That this parish request the Rev. Dr. Holmes, the pastor of said

parish, to exchange a reasonable proportion of the time with such respectable clergymen of the liberal denomination, as are now pastors of the religious societies with which the religious society in this parish has been associated.*

2. That this parish request the Rev. Dr. Holmes to reject Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns, and to substitute therefor, and to use, the Collection of Psalms and Hymns now used in the chapel of Harvard University.

3. That this parish (if the last mentioned Collection of Psalms and Hymns should be substituted as aforesaid) will authorize the parish committee, at the expense of the parish, to purchase an adequate number of the same to supply the Rev. Dr. Holmes, and the singing seats, and any poor parishioners, who are unable to purchase.

4. That this parish will invite such respectable clergymen of the liberal denomination, as are now pastors of the religious societies, with which the religious society in this parish has been heretofore associated, to preach in the meeting-house of this parish, at such times as shall not interfere with any parochial religious exercise now established and held in said meeting-house, and will appoint a committee to present the vote of invitation to said clergymen in behalf of the parish, and if such invitation be accepted, to appoint and agree upon the time of their preaching in said meeting-house, and to make the same known to the inhabitants of said parish, and to make all necessary and convenient arrangements therefor.

5. That a committee of five persons, to be nominated by the Moderator, be chosen to carry the last mentioned vote into effect.†

At this meeting a remonstrance, of which the following is an abstract, was presented against the then proposed measures, by sundry of the parishioners, for the following reasons:—Because, Dr. Holmes was settled by the unanimous vote of the church and people—Because, the recent disaffection was from the doctrines taught by him, fully known to be held by him at the time of his settlement, and uniformly inculcated by him ever since—Because, unless restricted by agreement, ministers have a right to regulate their ministrations in regard to exchanges—Because, in relation to the exchange of Psalms

* There has been no such association with the religious *societies* in the vicinity of Cambridge.

† By these articles, specifically stated in the warrant for the parish meeting, the final aim of the parishioners, who called for the meeting, may be fairly inferred. It appears not to have been their intention to stop at moderate concessions, if made, respecting exchanges. Their vote, at this first meeting, to invite ministers of the liberal denomination to preach in the meeting house of this parish, shows how fast they would have proceeded in their innovations upon the principles and usages of the church and society. The invited ministers knew better what belongs to pastoral rights and privileges, and what would be an infraction of order and peace in the community; and would not come.

and Hymns, no previous consultation had been held with the pastor or church, nor any proposed in the warrant, by committee, or otherwise, but a naked proposition made to introduce the collection used in Harvard University—a collection, of recent publication, not known to pastor, or church, or many of the congregation.

At this meeting the correspondence between the individual memorialists of the parish and Dr. Holmes was introduced. The first memorial to him having been read, a request was made that the answer of Dr. Holmes should also be read. This was objected to on the ground, that the correspondence was voluminous and would take up too much time. The moderator having overruled the question of reading the answer, an appeal was made, from this decision, to the meeting; and it was voted that the answer should *not* be read; the meeting, thus, preferring to act in ignorance of Dr. Holmes's answer, rather than with a knowledge of it. Nearly as much time was consumed in debating the question, as it would have taken to have read the correspondence; and the objection of voluminousness would not apply to Dr. H—'s part of the correspondence.

Other measures were adopted unfriendly to liberal discussion, particularly the sustaining of a call for the *previous question*, which precluded further debate.

The votes of the parish were communicated by the parish clerk to the pastor, who made the following reply.

To the First Parish in Cambridge.

The parish clerk some time since gave me a copy of certain votes, passed at a parish meeting on the 7th of January. That meeting having been dissolved, and no persons appearing to be authorized, either to confer with me on the subjects voted upon, or to receive any communication from me, I have been at a loss to know when, or by whom, to return you an answer. This is written, that, when the proper time and opportunity shall occur, it may be communicated to you.

Upon the vote, requesting me "to exchange a reasonable proportion of the time with such respectable clergymen of the liberal denomination, as are now pastors of the religious societies with which the religious society in this parish has been associated,"—I would respectfully observe to you, that a similar request was made to me some time since by certain memorialists, to whom I gave what I thought should be regarded as a clear and satisfactory answer. Another memorial, however, was presented to me, repeating the same request, but carried to a greater extent, at least more explicitly declaring a desire to have doctrines, on important subjects, at vari-

ance with and opposed to the doctrines held and preached by your present pastor and his predecessors, introduced into our pulpit by ministers of a different denomination. This second memorial was also answered. In both were assigned reasons against the measure, derived from a sense of personal responsibility, ministerial consistency, and pastoral fidelity, and from a regard to all the dearest and best interests of the church and society.

Understanding that the first memorial was read in the parish meeting, but neither of my answers, and believing that the parish, as such, have not known my views of the subject; I respectfully refer you to the answers I have already given—a copy of which, if not furnished you by the memorialists, will be promptly furnished by myself.

In the mean time, I have availed myself of the late recurrence of the anniversary of my installation—an anniversary which I have uniformly observed in a similar manner—to present to the people of my pastoral charge, and to myself, such truths and duties, as I believed might be for our mutual improvement. On this occasion, I felt it incumbent upon me to let the whole assembly of worshippers know—what many of them might not otherwise have known—what were the principles upon which this church was originally founded, and what were the principles of its ministers, during the long succession of nearly two hundred years. The original principles of the church, I endeavored to show, from authentic sources of evidence, have been maintained here with remarkable uniformity during the whole period, inclusive of the thirty six years of my own ministry.

The reasons for not departing from our principles, or introducing into the ministrations of the sanctuary the principles of any denomination of ministers, known and avowed to be very different from and opposed to our own, may be seen in the papers to which I have referred you. To those papers I ask your serious and candid attention, in the persuasion, that, whether you consider the reasons there offered, which respect my pastoral duties and rights of conscience, or those which respect your best interests as a church and society, you will allow them to be sufficient to justify me in declining to accede to a proposal, which, in my apprehension, and in the judgment of a large and respectable part of the parish, interferes with those duties, and rights, and interests.

Upon the vote, requesting me “to reject Dr. Watts’s Psalms and Hymns, now used, and to substitute therefor, and to use, the collection of Psalms and Hymns now used in the chapel of Harvard University”—I would observe, that the rejection of a version, so highly approved in most of our churches, and so deliberately and harmoniously introduced into our own, and the introduction of a collection, unknown to a great part of the church and society, as well as to the pastor, without a reason assigned for the exchange, would, I apprehend, be irregular, unprecedented, and unjustifiable. The version now used, was introduced some years since, by the concurrence of the church, and society, and the pastor. Without such concurrence, and especially in opposition to the declared opinion and wishes of a large and respectable part of the church and parish, neither my judgment nor my conscience will allow me to reject the present version for another.

Your’s respectfully,

Cambridge, 7th February, 1828.

A. HOLMES.

At a subsequent parish meeting on the 5th of April, 1828, the following votes were passed :

Voted, That this parish do request the Rev. Dr. Holmes, the pastor of said parish, to consent to the election and settlement by said parish of such a colleague as shall be satisfactory to said parish, to co-operate with him in the performance of the duties of a public teacher of piety, religion and morality, in said parish.

Voted, That this parish do request the Rev. Dr. Holmes, the pastor of said parish, to assent to an invitation by said parish to such clergymen as they may elect to invite to preach in the meeting-house of said parish, on the Sabbath, not exceeding one half the time.

Voted, That this parish do request the Rev. Dr. Holmes, the pastor of said parish, to assent to an invitation by said parish to any clergymen whom they may elect to invite to deliver lectures in the pulpit of the meeting-house of said parish, at such times as the said parish may appoint.

Voted, That a Committee of six be chosen by ballot to present to the Rev. Dr. Holmes a copy of record of the doings of said meeting, and to request his answer thereto, with power to treat with him on any incidental questions that may arise.

A remonstrance, of which the following is an abstract, was offered by sundry parishioners, against the proposed measures, for these amongst other reasons :

Because a tax levied for the support of two competent teachers of piety, religion and morality would be illegal—Because the incumbent in office was fully competent to discharge all his ministerial and parochial duties, and had, in fact, of late, been uncommonly devoted in supplying personally his pulpit—Because of the unnecessary expense to the parish.

To the second and third articles in the Warrant the objections, offered to the first, were said to apply with equal force.

The votes of the parish were communicated by the committee to the pastor ; who on the 11th of April made the following reply :

To the First Parish in Cambridge.

Had the grounds and reasons of your vote to request me to consent to your election and settlement of a colleague, been stated to me, I might have been enabled to form a more competent judgment respecting my present duty. The request, as it is presented to me, unsupported by any assigned reason, leaves me to the consideration of it with no other light than what is derived from preceding transactions. In those transactions there is no allusion whatever to the present proposal, which, made as it is without consultation or conference with your pastor, subjects him to the necessity—unprecedented, it is believed, in a case of such solemn and mutual concern—

of judging and answering for himself alone. But he has devoutly and importunately sought *divine* light and guidance; and it will be his aim to give an answer which his own conscience will approve, and which, he trusts, will commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

The design of the introduction of a colleague, so far as I can perceive, must be, either to co-operate with your present pastor in the maintenance of the same religious principles which he has maintained during his whole ministry; or, to attempt to co-operate with him in the maintenance of different principles, and a different course of ministrations. If the design were to have an harmonious co-operation, such as would "become the gospel of Christ," and tend, with a divine blessing, to promote truth and piety, unity and peace; your pastor might reasonably have expected the expression of such a design, in which his feelings, his cares, and his labors, must be intimately and deeply concerned. If the design were, to have a colleague to co-operate with him in the maintenance of such religious principles, as neither this church, nor any of its ministers, have ever maintained—a co-operation, which, instead of being harmonious, would be necessarily discordant—your pastor might still have justly expected to be made acquainted with that design. Were an harmonious co-operation intended, had the necessity or expediency of settling a colleague been made to appear, your pastor might have been able to give an answer to mutual satisfaction; on the contrary supposition, neither his judgment, nor his conscience, would allow him to consent to a measure, alike hostile to his own peace and usefulness, and, as he solemnly believes, to all your best interests for this world and the next.

Without the knowledge of the grounds and reasons of the request, and in opposition to the declared judgment and wishes of a large and respectable proportion of my parishioners, I cannot consent to the election and settlement of a colleague. Nor can I, for the same reasons, give my assent to a division of the services of the sabbath with ministers, whom I may neither know, nor approve.

An arrangement having been already made, and a committee authorized, to invite clergymen to deliver lectures in our meeting-house, without consultation or conference with your pastor, he is precluded from giving or withholding his assent to a measure, which would be discountenanced by all the courtesies of society, and which is at variance with all the established usages of christian churches and people.

With due respect and regard,

A. HOLMES, Pastor.

Cambridge, April 11, 1828.

At a parish meeting on the 17th of May, a communication from the pastor, in relation to the votes of the parish on the 5th of April last, was read, and ordered to be placed on the files of the parish papers. A remonstrance, signed by William Hilliard, Esq. and others, against the objects and proceedings of this meeting being

offered, and heard, it was voted that the same be placed upon the files of the parish papers. At this meeting it was voted,

That this parish do request the Rev. Dr. Holmes to discontinue the public evening lectures in the meeting-house of said parish, and in said parish, by clergymen of the Calvinistic denomination :

That this parish do request the Rev. Dr. Holmes to discontinue his exchanges with clergymen of the Calvinistic denomination :

That this parish do request the Rev. Dr. Holmes, in case he shall not comply with the requests in the preceding votes, to ask a dismissal from his office of pastor of said parish.

Sundry inhabitants remonstrated, at this meeting, against the proposed measures, for the following, amongst other reasons. Because, as they say, "an attempt to prohibit a number of individuals, within the parish, assembling with their pastor (and that, too, without encroaching upon the legal rights of the parish at all) for the purpose of attending upon a course of moral and religious instruction derived from the word of God, appears to your remonstrants an alarming stretch of power in a majority of uplifted hands against the minority."*

Because an attempt, as by the 3d article, to control the minister's right of exchanges with clergymen of his own sentiments, "could only be equalled by a request, that he should preach, not what he might believe, but what his parish might see fit to dictate to him."

A committee was appointed to receive the answer of the pastor to the proceedings of this meeting, with authority to confer with him, should he desire such conference, in relation to the subject matter of the preceding votes, and the acts of the parish in reference to the same. These votes were communicated to the pastor on the 19th of May, and on the 31st he gave the following reply :

To the First Parish in Cambridge.

The parish Clerk has communicated to me your votes, requesting me "to discontinue the public exercise of evening lectures in the meeting-house, and in the parish, by men of the Calvinistic denomination; and to discontinue my exchanges with clergymen of the Calvinistic denomination."

Calvinistic, like many other terms by which Christians of different religious principles are meant to be distinguished, is often very errone-

*The sabbath evening meetings alone were holden in the house belonging to the parish, and these in amount not oftener than once a fortnight.

ously and unjustly applied to ministers and churches. Supposing you to mean by "Calvinistic" that denomination of Christians who hold to the great principles of the Protestant Reformation—not in every particular, perhaps, as they were held by that eminent Reformer, "whose praise is in all the churches"—but coinciding with him, generally, as with the other principal Reformers, in the reception of doctrines which they believe to be scriptural and rational;—there appears no reason why men of this denomination should be excluded from us. Christians of that denomination profess the same general principles of religion which have been professed by the purest churches in Christendom—I mean, the Reformed churches of Holland, of Switzerland, of Geneva, of France, the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, and the first churches of New England. How a minister holding those principles, and uniformly maintaining them in a long ministry in connexion with a church originally formed and settled upon those very principles, and never professedly nor actually renouncing them, can consistently, or honestly, withhold an exchange of stated or occasional services with ministers of that denomination, I cannot perceive.

The general principles professed by the Reformed churches are the very principles upon which the First Church in Cambridge was originally formed and settled, and which neither this church, nor its minister, have renounced, during the long period of nearly two hundred years. Were I to discontinue my exchanges with ministers of these principles, or to cease to avail myself of their occasional services, at suitable times and places, as the state and circumstances of the church and people might appear to require; I should act in opposition to my judgment and conscience, and could not feel myself justifiable in the sight of God or man. After the assurance which I had received from the memorialists, that they "should be most unwilling to interfere with my convictions of duty, or rights of conscience," it could not reasonably have been expected that I should so soon afterward be presented with requests which are a direct and palpable interference with both.

As the last vote, making a still farther request, rises out of the two previous votes, and has a sole reference to the answer that should be given to the requests there made, and those votes being grounded on principles which, I apprehend, must appear to every unprejudiced mind to be as unreasonable as they are unprecedented; allow me to say, it could hardly have been expected by those making the request, that it should be complied with. A compliance with this request, upon such principles, would, in my view, be not indefensible merely, but highly culpable. It would be a desertion of those of the Society who accord with me and my predecessors of this church and parish in religious principles, and who have solemnly protested against the procedure. It would be a desertion of my divine Master; and I could not answer to him for such a dereliction, for "I am under the law to Christ." It would be a desertion of this beloved church, which has been committed to my pastoral care; and I could not answer for such dereliction to the church, or to "the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls." It would be a baneful precedent, tending to unsettle the rights, and to disturb the order, of churches and parishes. It would tend to discourage young men of talents and piety from

entering into the christian ministry, and thus injuriously affect the best interests of the civil and christian community. It would serve to break down the institutions of public instruction and of united social worship, introduced by our wise and pious forefathers, and most successfully maintained in New England to the present day.

In this view of the subject, I am constrained to say, that a compliance with requests inconsistent with my religious principles and ordination vows, and, in my apprehension, prejudicial to the ultimate good of the parish itself, cannot reasonably be expected on your part, nor acceded to on my own.

I am yours respectfully,

Cambridge, May 31, 1828.

A. HOLMES.

Before another parish meeting was called, this answer having been, in some way, divulged by the committee, a paper, subscribed by a number of parishioners, and dated 2d August, 1828, was presented to the pastor on the subject of the last parish votes, and the answer to them. It comprised 28 folio pages. Unofficial as it is, a sketch of its object and character is subjoined :

"We think it expedient," said the subscribers, "to express to you our objections to that answer, and the reasons of the dissatisfaction, which it has excited in our minds. . . . On reflection, we approve both the votes and the principles on which they are founded." It was principally a dissertation upon the principles of Calvinism, and upon the Protestant Reformation—severe strictures upon both, and upon the *Pastor* from whose name the term Calvinistic is derived. The rights of conscience are again insisted upon; and it is alleged, that, on a just view of the subject, "the rights claimed" by the subscribing parishioners "do not, in the least possible degree, interfere with the pastor's rights of conscience." A hope is expressed, in the conclusion, that the pastor would "seriously, impartially and critically reconsider the past transactions" between him and a majority of his parishioners; and that he may, "in consequence, make such decision as shall be satisfactory to all concerned and promotive of their best interests."

To this paper the pastor, on the 9th of August, made the following reply :

To the subscribers to a paper of the 2d inst. communicated by their Committee.

The votes of the parish of the 17th of May having requested me to exclude ministers of the "Calvinistic denomination" from our

public services, I stated in my answer what I supposed to be meant by those words. If that be not the meaning, the words are, to me, unintelligible. I need only say, it is not the character of the Reformer, that is here in question, nor what can be said for, or against, the principles of the Reformation; nor is it the question, Whether the principles of our church are founded on the opinions of any man, or body of men; for it is certain, that they were originally, and are still, professedly believed on the authority of the Bible. All christian churches and religious societies, it is taken for granted, have some professed principles of religion. When a minister has become settled in a church and society upon their own professed principles, he himself preferring them, he is unquestionably at liberty to change his own principles, if he see just cause; but, in that case, he can no longer claim to be their minister. His parishioners also have unquestionably the same liberty; but, in case of their change, they cannot reasonably claim the introduction of their diverse and opposite principles into his ministry.

My answer to the votes of the parish is grounded on the obligation I feel myself under to the church and parish, by our mutual engagements, and by my ordination vows; and I request the parish committee to communicate it to the parish, with the best wishes for its peace and welfare, and the sincere regards of

its affectionate pastor,

A. HOLMES.

Cambridge, August 9, 1828.

At a parish meeting held on the 22d of December, 1828, a communication from the pastor, bearing date May 31, 1828, in relation to the votes of the parish of May 17, was read, and ordered to be placed on the files of the parish papers.

The following preamble and motion were adopted and passed:

Whereas the Rev. Dr. Holmes for more than thirty years after his settlement as pastor over the First parish in Cambridge—following the example of his immediate predecessors in said office,—was in the practice of frequent liberal and impartial exchanges with clergymen of the congregational order,—but within three years last past has altogether abandoned such liberal and impartial practice of exchanges, contrary to the wishes, and against the expressed request of a great majority of the legal voters in said parish, and has, instead thereof, adopted and followed the illiberal, and, as we believe, *un-christian—exclusive system* of a few zealous and overbearing divines,—which is altogether opposed to his long practice during many years, and to immemorial usage in this parish;—restricting his exchanges and invitations to the particular set of preachers self-styled Orthodox, against the expressed wishes of a majority of his parishioners, and knowing that the introduction of such preachers was exceedingly painful to such majority;—and whereas the members of this parish are convinced, that the practice of exchanges, originally intended for two valuable purposes, to wit, the relief of

teachers in their parochial duties, and the cultivation of good fellowship between sister churches, was always subordinate in its very nature to the more important point of harmony between the minister and his people; and the introduction of teachers whose known opinions are offensive to the majority of any parish is diametrically opposed to the very principles on which exchanges—never a matter of right, but always one of courtesy,—were founded, and that it is a gross and unkind abuse of such an indulgence to introduce teachers, whose opinions are known to the pastor to be offensive to his flock; Whereas by these and other innovations in the performance of his public duties, as pastor, as well as by his inflexible and constant refusal to accede to the reasonable wishes of a great majority of the qualified voters in said parish, as expressed from time to time by memorials, addresses, and votes of said parish, requesting him to return to his former practice of liberal exchanges, or to discontinue to invite to his pulpit clergymen of the Calvinistic denomination, the affection and regard of said parishioners have become alienated from their said pastor, and his influence and usefulness in said office have been much impaired, if not utterly destroyed, as regards the majority of said parish;—and whereas it is desirable that said parishioners may obtain relief from grievances long suffered from the before mentioned and other conduct and proceedings of their pastor, (hereafter to be specified by their committee, if chosen) and that all existing controversies and complaints between him and his people may be adjusted in a peaceful, equitable and legal manner—Therefore,

Voted, That this parish will appoint a committee to propose to the Rev. Dr. Holmes to unite with them in calling a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, to advise in relation to all differences and matters of controversy existing between him and said parish before such Council, and to employ counsel to assist them if they shall deem it expedient, and to adopt and pursue all suitable and legal measures, in relation to a settlement of said difficulties, or dissolution of the connexion existing between the said Holmes and said parish.

It was also voted,

That said committee consist of seven persons, and that they be chosen by ballot.

The committee having been chosen, it was voted,

That this parish do authorize and direct said committee, in case the Rev. Dr. Holmes shall not accede to such proposition for a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, forthwith to proceed to the choice of an *ex parte* Council, for the purpose aforesaid, and to prepare, and lay before the same, such articles of charge, or causes of complaint, as they may deem lawful and expedient, and to appear and act before said Council in behalf of said parish, and to employ counsel to assist them, if they shall deem it expedient.

Voted, That this parish deem it unnecessary to take any further order in relation to the memorials and papers presented at this meeting by William Hilliard, Esq.

Upon the subject of the third article in the warrant,

two memorials—one from sundry inhabitants of the parish, and the other from the church, were presented.

Abstract of the parishioners' memorial.

The memorialists, after speaking, in their paper presented at this meeting, of their satisfaction with their pastor, express the hope, that the parish will not proceed contrary to the custom of admitting the church, in union with the parish and pastor, in the calling of a mutual Council, declare their full conviction that the church is ready so to unite, and "recommend to the parish to retrace their steps, and, at least, to ask for the concurrence of the church."

Abstract of the church's memorial.

The church remark, that when two bodies are interested in a common object, it is proper that neither should take measures involving rights and interests common to both, without mutual consultation, and a due regard to the views and feelings of the other; and ask, whether it is just that the parish should proceed without so much as informing the church officially of the measures contemplated. They then urge the usage in the removal of a minister,—the invariable usage of this church and parish in settling ministers, "unless it be one or two of the earliest," when the pastors "were settled by the church alone." They refer also to a special act of incorporation (grounded on the express will of the donors) of trustees of a fund towards the support of such pastor as shall be settled "by the joint concurrence of the inhabitants and the church." The church go on to express their regret at existing difficulties; and then continue: "They," the church, "feel as desirous as any of said inhabitants can feel, to adopt such measures as will tend to bring about an amicable adjustment of all such difficulties; provided, that the inhabitants of said parish, according to general usage, unite with said church, and their pastor, in calling a mutual Council: Therefore, Resolved, that a committee of five be appointed from this church, associated with the pastor thereof, with full powers and authority to confer with the inhabitants of the parish, or any committee appointed for the purpose, and to act upon the subject of calling a mutual Council, to settle all difficulties existing between the inhabitants of said parish and the Rev. Dr. Holmés, as is set forth in the warrant for calling a parish meeting, on the 22d instant."

Upon the question of admitting the memorial of the church, it was objected, that the church was not known as a corporation, and that they had no legal rights, and could have no interest in the subject, separate from the parish; and that the strict principles of law were alone to govern in this case. Accordingly, this memorial, after being read, was, along with the memorial of the minority of the parish, laid upon the table, and not allowed to be put upon the parish files.

On the 1st of January, 1829, the committee appointed by the parish to propose to the pastor to unite with them

in calling a mutual ecclesiastical Council, requested the pastor to inform them at what time and place he would please to meet them, for the purpose of conferring in relation to the object of their appointment. To this request, presented in writing, the pastor replied, on the same day; That the very peculiar circumstances attending the measure adopted by the parish, proposing to him to unite with them in calling a mutual ecclesiastical Council rendered it his incumbent duty to consider the subject very seriously and deliberately, previous to any conference; and that when prepared for it, the committee might expect information from him.

On the 9th of January, a committee, in behalf of the church, presented to the pastor the following address :

Rev. Sir,—The undersigned, a committee, appointed by the first church in Cambridge, at a meeting holden on the fourth day of January, inst. to express to you their views in relation to the late proceedings of the inhabitants of the first parish in said town, deeply affecting the relations subsisting between you and said church and parish, respectfully represent,

That they have viewed with deep solicitude the various measures, that have recently been adopted by a majority of the parish in said town, tending to a dissolution of the ministerial relation, which has so long and so happily subsisted between pastor and church, minister and people. They cannot but believe, that most, if not all, the measures proposed and adopted by said parish, are rare, if not altogether unprecedented in their nature and tendency, and if carried into operation, would result in a total abandonment of that right of private judgment, and that independent exercise of this right, which appertains to the ministerial character in common with that of others.

The undersigned, having, in their capacity as members of the parish, already expressed their opinion, in relation to the several propositions made and adopted by a majority of said parish, deem it unnecessary here to enumerate them. But upon a careful review of the opinions thus formed, and the reasons urged in their support, they have perceived no sufficient ground for a different judgment. We however, deem it important, in the present state of things, in our capacity as members of your church, to express our dissent from the measures adopted by the parish, in their corporate capacity, and our approbation of the course taken by you, in relation to the several propositions submitted to your consideration. We do this, from a full conviction that a sense of duty, and of the solemn obligation imposed upon a minister of Christ, conscientiously and fearlessly to discharge this duty, alone guided your deliberations and final decisions. We are also persuaded, that many and fervent supplications have been directed to the Source of all Wisdom, for that light and guidance, in coming to such results, as would ultimately tend to promote the greatest amount of good to those, with whom you sustained so

near and so endearing a relation. In view of this relation, which has so long and so happily subsisted between us, we cannot forbear to express our regret, at the adoption of such measures, as have a tendency either to impair or destroy it, and devoutly to wish and pray, that the overruling providence of God may bring about a result most promotive of his glory, and the best interest of the church of Christ in this place. We trust, that as individuals, as well as a church, we have already given sufficient pledges of our attachment to the doctrines which you have preached and still continue to preach, as, in our view, consistent both with reason and the word of God, and as best calculated, by a divine blessing, to promote the temporal, spiritual, and eternal welfare, of the people committed to your pastoral care. On your part also, sufficient pledges have been given, by a long, watchful and diligent discharge of those duties, appertaining to the ministerial relation, as well as in all the other relations of life; and we are persuaded, that in all these relations, it has been your desire and aim to advance the cause of truth and of God, both by precept and by example. Impressed with this conviction, we cannot refrain from repeating our approbation of your past ministerial labors, in this ancient church of Christ, and pledging our future co-operation with you, in perpetuating the unity of its faith, in the bond of peace. However deeply we may regret that at this late period of your life, and of your ministry, any root of bitterness springing up, should trouble you—however ardently we should desire that your sun should set without a cloud; we yet believe, that it is the providence of God, which has otherwise ordered it, for the trial of faith, and the furtherance of hope; and that by his overruling hand, his own glory will be advanced, and the unity, peace, and safety of his church here promoted.

Although the professed object of the memorialists in their first request to you, was confined to occasional ministerial intercourse in the way of exchanges with neighboring clergymen, yet the subsequent measures, proposed and adopted by the parish, clearly show, that this was only a first step, in a long and systematic train of propositions, which have been adopted, all tending to the same object.

[Here is given an abstract of the votes and doings of the parish, which need not be repeated.]

These facts, with many other considerations, that might be urged, serve to show, that a radical change in your ministrations, if not in your opinions, was what could alone satisfy the memorialists.

Under these circumstances, the members of this church have manifested a willingness, and have voted to co-operate with the parish, at a late parish meeting, holden for the purpose, to unite with them in calling a mutual Council for the object contemplated and specified in the warrant for calling said meeting. This offer on the part of the church, was rejected under circumstances, not altogether favorable to a reconciliation of existing difficulties, and, as we believe, without a due degree of regard to the rights of the church, as a party deeply concerned in the result. The denial by the parish, of even a *hearing* of the church, upon so important a subject, as that of the dismissal of its pastor, and that *any right existed in this body, as such*, in relation to this subject, we confidently hope and believe, will never be sanctioned by a discriminating and enlightened public.

Whatever color may have been given to a principle of this kind, in any given case, we are at a loss to perceive its application in the case now under consideration. By an immemorial usage of this ancient church, and of most other churches in New England, the settlement or dismissal of a minister has been effected by the joint co-operation of the parish and church; and the continuance of this principle or usage has been strongly recommended by the highest judicial tribunal of our Commonwealth. Moreover, it is recognized by the very charter, under which we hold a great proportion of the means of supporting the ministry in this place. The act incorporating the ministerial fund, belonging to this parish, expressly provides, that the income thereof shall be applied to such minister as shall be settled by the joint concurrence of the parish and church; and we conceive, that this provision applies with equal force, in the question of a dissolution of the connexion under this provision. Upon this view of the subject, we feel ourselves bound in duty, to contend for those rights, which are derived from so ancient an usage as amounts to common law, as also, from the express condition of our own enactments.

From a careful and impartial view, therefore, of the whole subject, the undersigned, in behalf of the church, feel constrained to believe, that a sense of duty, a regard to the honor, the interest, and the permanent good of the people under your pastoral care, have been the governing motives which have influenced you in the decisions made upon the several propositions, submitted by the parish. We cannot close, without again expressing our sympathy, and assuring you of our support in any farther decisions, which the rights of pastor and church, and the interests of religion among us, may require of you to make.

WILLIAM HILLIARD, JAMES MUNROE, RICHARD H. DANA, S. F. SAWYER, WILLIAM SAUNDERS, JONA. C. PRENTISS.	}	Committee.
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Cambridge, Jan. 9, 1829.

On the 28th of January, 1829, the pastor made the following communication:

To the committee appointed by the First Parish in Cambridge, at a meeting held on the 22d day of December, 1828, to propose to the pastor to unite with them in calling a mutual Ecclesiastical Council.

Had a plain vote of the parish, requesting my consent to a proposal for a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, been presented to me for consideration, an earlier answer might have been expected. I regret, that, after so much explanation and discussion, the subject is not well understood, or not fairly represented. The statements and the language of the Preamble to the votes were not justly to have been expected from a parish, whose best interests I am conscious of having uniformly endeavored to promote for thirty seven years; and if I now trouble you with more explanation and discussion, "you have compelled me."

Erroneous premises lead to false conclusions. If words are used either vaguely or ambiguously, they may cause great and injurious mistakes. It was this consideration that led me to endeavor to explain the word "Calvinistic," used in former votes of the parish, which appeared to me ambiguous, as there used to denote the principles of ministers in New England. In the last proceedings, the term "Congregational" is used; and the error and imputation connected with it render an explanation necessary, not to my defence merely, but to the cause of truth.

It is made an express ground of the votes passed by the parish on this occasion, as stated in the preamble, "That for more than thirty years the pastor of the first parish in Cambridge, following the example of his immediate predecessors in said office, was in the practice of frequent, liberal and impartial exchanges with clergymen of the Congregational order; but within three years last past has altogether abandoned such liberal and impartial practice of exchanges."

If the term "Congregational" designated now, as it did originally, the real or professed principles of ministers so denominated, it might be made a subject of complaint, were a congregational minister, without special reason, to decline exchanges with ministers of the "congregational order;" if, on the contrary, it does not now designate the real or professed religious principles of ministers of that order, no inference can be drawn from it concerning a minister's obligation with respect to exchanges.

Congregational is a term which has a particular reference to church government, and does *not* determine the religious principles of a church bearing that name. It denotes an ecclesiastical polity peculiar to itself, as distinguished from the polity of the Episcopal church in England, of the Lutheran church in Germany, of the Presbyterian church in Scotland, and the Reformed church in France, Switzerland, and Geneva. It is a term which was adopted by the first churches of New England, to denote the reservation of rights and powers in the brethren of the church, which in other churches are conceded to bishops and convocations, to presbyteries and consistories. Nothing is more evident than that a church may be, in name and in fact, congregational, and yet essentially differ in its religious principles from other congregational churches. The first congregational churches of New England agreed in the principles of their faith with the church of England, the church of Scotland, and the Reformed churches in Europe; but it does not hence follow, nor is it true, that all the later congregational churches have professed the same principles.

This distinction in regard to *churches*, is strictly applicable to *ministers*, of the "congregational order." Ministers may truly profess and maintain the ecclesiastical *polity* of the congregational churches, while they disbelieve and discard the *religious principles* which were originally believed and professed by congregational ministers, and which are still believed and professed by a very great proportion of the ministers of that order in New England. Such is the fact at the present time—a fact which need not be proved, because it is openly avowed; because it is assumed as a fact by the memorialists in their addresses to me upon the subject of exchanges with ministers of the "liberal denomination;" as also by the parish, in its votes

and proceedings, in language too explicit to be misunderstood. If the declaration of the memorialists of their belief, that principles "more liberal" than ours are "more rational and scriptural," were not sufficient to this purpose; the request of the parish to exclude all ministers of the Calvinistic denomination from our pulpit, and from lectures in the parish, places the fact beyond all question.

Ministers of the "liberal denomination," then, are by their own choice, by the memorialists, and by the parish itself, distinguished from ministers of the Calvinistic denomination; *that is to say*, from ministers who essentially maintain the principles that were held by the first ministers of New England. Now, it is well known, that before and at the time of my settlement in the ministry in Cambridge, there was not a single church, nor a single minister, of the "congregational order," in New England, that was openly and avowedly of the "liberal denomination," as the term is now understood. My predecessors, therefore, furnished no precedent for the case in question; for they never did exchange with ministers of the denomination that I am asked to exchange with; and the argument, erroneously drawn from their supposed example, falls to the ground.

In regard to my practice until "the last three years," if it be not remembered, it ought to be known, that for several years preceding that period, my exchanges with individual ministers, with whom I had been accustomed to exchange, had been discontinued. Such exchanges were not sought on my part, because those ministers either openly avowed the principles of the liberal denomination, or gave satisfactory evidence of their having embraced them; in some instances, they were not sought on theirs. In these and in later instances of such discontinuance, there was believed to be sufficient cause. Some of them may have been cases of casuistry, which the ministers concerned, and we only, could decide for ourselves. In forming my judgment, I may have erred; if I erred on the uncharitable side, it was unconsciously; if on the side of charity, "forgive me this wrong."

Respectable congregational ministers of these different denominations appear to consider it neither consistent on their part, nor conducive to the good of the churches and people under their pastoral care, to exchange public services, and introduce opposite and discordant doctrines into their respective pulpits; and some of the most liberal have expressed a decided opinion, that such exchanges are not advisable. Ministers of this last description have admitted the principle of the limitation of exchanges, and have acted upon it. An instance is recollected to have occurred in Boston—where a minister advanced in the pulpit religious opinions so much more liberal than those which were embraced by his brethren of that very denomination, that they discontinued their accustomed exchanges with him. The judgment of respected ministers, of both the denominations referred to, upon this subject, was adverted to on a former occasion; and, however parishioners may have estimated the judgment of their parish minister, it were to have been expected that they would have shown more regard and deference to the judgment of those ministers, whose religious sentiments are in accordance with their own. To what was observed on this subject, in my answer to the first memorial, I respectfully refer the committee.

What a classical author said, many centuries since, is applicable to this case: *sunt certi denique fines*. "There are at length certain limits." What those limits are, it may be often difficult to define, or discover; but a minister of Christ is solemnly bound to search for them by the light of the word of God, and so far as they are made plain to him, he ought religiously to regard them.

The unreasonableness of asking or expecting a minister to have no exchanges or pastoral intercourse with ministers of the same denomination with himself, and of the same principles which his church holds now, and always has held from its first formation, has been previously stated by your minister, who, on this point, refers you to his communication to the parish, of the 31st of May. For a fair judgment in this case, he appeals to the tribunal of Reason; and for precedents, to all the churches in Christendom.

For the ministrations in my pulpit I acknowledge myself responsible. During the recent period within which my exchanges have been more especially excepted to, I have more constantly than usual performed the services of my own pulpit. When I did exchange them, I exchanged with worthy and respectable ministers of our own principles. Had I, in accordance with the request of the parish, discontinued all exchanges with such ministers, I should, indeed, have departed from the immemorial usage of my predecessors, and introduced an innovation which would have justly incurred the censure passed in your preamble upon me and my brethren in the christian ministry. The characters of those ministers who have preached for us, by exchange or otherwise, the last three years, are too well known and respected to require from me, either apology, or vindication.

It ought to be observed, that in the copy of the vote communicated to me, the statement of the numbers voting is no criterion of the state of the parish in relation to the main question. The vote, I am well informed, was understood to be taken upon the preamble; and it was upon that understanding of the motion that the minority voted. Nor did those parishioners who disapproved the measures proposed in the notices for this parish meeting, and for the preceding meetings subsequent to the first, make any effort to collect their whole number; on the contrary, it was their prevailing opinion, that it was not expedient for more to attend, than a competent number to sustain the memorials and remonstrances. This, I am assured, is also true with respect to the number of names subscribed to the memorial presented by parishioners to the parish, at its last meeting. No effort was made to obtain the signatures of all who had expressed their disapprobation of the measures of the parish.

The church is well united. The votes at a church meeting, for presenting a memorial to the parish respecting a mutual Council, and at a subsequent meeting for an address to the pastor, approving of his proceedings and of his ministrations, were nearly unanimous. The remonstrants of the 17th of May having expressed their opinion, that "were the females of the *parish* allowed to speak, a majority of them would entreat you to forbear,"—the pastor may be permitted to subjoin an opinion, that, were the females of the *church*, amounting to nearly eighty, allowed to speak, much more would they use the same language. In estimating our religious state, the feelings and

principles of so considerable a portion of our stated religious assemblies may not be overlooked.

While on the subject of the interior and general state of the church and society under my pastoral care, I feel bound to say, that, so far from finding causes of discouragement in my ministry during three or four of the last years, I have found very much to encourage me. The public services of the Sabbath, it has appeared to me, have been attended by greater numbers, and with more solemnity. The last of these encouraging circumstances has been repeatedly observed by ministers from abroad, occasionally preaching here. It was this, with other indications of more than ordinary attention to the concerns of religion, that induced us to have meetings in the week time, as we had previously had, occasionally, for thirty years. The design of these meetings was, to promote the unity and the extension of the church, and the improvement of its members in exemplary virtue and piety; to instruct and assist the inquiring; and to encourage all who were disposed to attend them. The number of attendants was in a short time so large, that it was found necessary to transfer the meetings from a private dwelling-house to the Court-house. Here, for the same religious purpose, lectures were held; and they were so frequented as to encourage their continuance to this time. During this period a divine blessing appears to have attended our stated and occasional ministrations. The church, now consisting of nearly one hundred members, has received considerable accessions, and there are encouraging indications of its enlargement. Had the pastor disregarded the peculiar state of his flock, at the time referred to; had he declined to meet the thoughtful and inquiring at any other time than on the Sabbath, or in any other place than in that of our stated solemnities; had he, out of the house of God, forborne all such religious exercises as he believed to be adapted, with the divine blessing, to bring serious inquirers, especially the young, to the knowledge of the truth, that they might be saved; he would not have acted the part of a faithful shepherd, and if, through his unfaithfulness or neglect, any of his flock had perished, their blood would have been required at his hand by the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Had he, above all, discountenanced and opposed such religious inquiries, and such instructive and devotional exercises, as the case appeared evidently to require, and closed or obstructed the gate of the church to those who were "not far from the kingdom of God;" he would have incurred the "wo" pronounced by our divine Lord upon those faithless guides in the Jewish church, who "took away the key of knowledge, and shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; who entered not in themselves, nor suffered them who were entering to go in."

With this presentation of facts, too important to be concealed, and of explanations too material to be suppressed, I am entirely ready and disposed for a mutual Ecclesiastical Council. It ought, however, to be a regular Council, called and organized according to the immemorial usage of the churches of New England. To such a Council it is, in my view, necessary that the church under my pastoral care be represented. The church, of their own accord, have asserted their right to have a part in a transaction of such importance as the calling of a Council for the purposes proposed by the parish. They

claim it by having been "a party in the settlement of the pastor;" by the ancient and general usage of churches and parishes to act in concert in the settlement and removal of a minister—particularly by the invariable usage of this church; and by the terms of the act incorporating the trustees of the ministry fund in this parish, requiring the appropriation of the avails to such congregational minister as shall be regularly ordained and settled in the parish "by the joint concurrence of the inhabitants and the church thereof." At the same time, the church, in a spirit of kindness and conciliation, in their memorial have expressed themselves "as desirous as any of the parish can feel, to adopt such measures as will tend to bring about an amicable adjustment of all difficulties; Provided, that the other inhabitants of said parish, according to general usage, unite with said church and their pastor in calling a mutual Council." A respectable number of parishioners, some of whom are not members of the church, have, in a memorial, presented to the parish the same view of the subject, and expressed their desire that the church might be represented in the proposed Council.

Called as I was into the ministry here by the distinct and separate, yet concurrent invitation of the church and of the parish, and feeling, as I do and ought to feel, a solemn responsibility for my pastoral care of the church, as well as for a sacred regard to its rights and privileges, I am not at liberty either to overlook or to interfere with its equitable claims.

To the proposal of the parish for a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, if regularly called according to the usage of our churches, and to the express desires of the church and other respected parishioners, no member of the church or parish more readily consents than

Your pastor,

A. HOLMES.

Cambridge, 28th January, 1829.

On the 9th of February, the committee of the parish made the following communication to the pastor :

Sir,—The committee were happy to find, by your reply to their communication, received the 28th ult., that you acquiesced in their proposal for a mutual Council: though you seemed to consider that a Council would not be regularly called without the intervention of the church.

You must be aware, sir, that this subject was fully discussed at the last parish meeting, and it was then decided, by a very large majority, that the parish could not consider the church as a party in this affair.—Deriving our authority from the parish, we must of course be governed by their decision; and we have no power of proposing a Council, except on the terms prescribed by their vote.—Had we the power, however, we do not hesitate to state that *our principles would not permit us to adopt any other course than that prescribed by the parish.*

We are at a loss, sir, to conceive how the church can act as a party in this case.—They have no ground of complaint against their pastor; on the contrary, they have declared, by the report of their committee, at their last church meeting, that they fully approved of his conduct—neither have they any complaint against the parish.

We hope, therefore, sir, that you will reconsider your former opinion on this subject, and, if you are then disposed to meet our proposal for a mutual Council, on the only terms which the vote of the parish permits us to offer you, we will thank you, sir, to name the number you wish the Council to consist of, or to appoint an early day to confer with us on the subject. Whatever you may decide on, we have to request, that your answer may be explicit and conclusive.

If, sir, we have not replied to the statements in your answer, it is because we considered they had been fully discussed in the previous communications between yourself and the parish, and a majority of the parishioners at divers times; and if there was any new matter introduced, we could not see its bearing on the business before us, which was, simply, to propose to you a mutual Council. If, sir, you should think proper to avail yourself of the statements made in your answer, on any future occasion, we shall be ready to meet them with the consideration they merit, whether before a mutual Council, or any other tribunal.

Respectfully, sir, in behalf of the committee,

WILLIAM J. WHIPPLE, *Clerk.*

Cambridge, Feb. 9, 1829.

To this the pastor replied: That a regular Ecclesiastical Council, it is to be presumed, is what we mutually desire; that he had already given them his deliberate opinion, and the reasons for it, respecting what is necessary to the formation of such a Council; that the consent to a regular mutual Council, as expressed in his last communication, is believed to be clear and explicit; and that he refers them to that paper as containing his answer.

In a communication to the pastor, dated the 5th of March and received on the 10th, the committee presume that he perfectly understood, from examining the votes transmitted to him, that the parish had determined to propose to him a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, for the purposes there mentioned; and on the memorial of his church, had refused to grant the prayer in that memorial, that the church might be admitted as a party in electing that Council, and in the trial before it . . . and presumed, that he would be willing to inform them in the most perspicuous and definite manner, whether he, without his church, would, or would not, meet the committee, and concur with them in electing such mutual Council as they had proposed to him.

To this, on the 14th of March, the pastor made the following reply:

To the Committee of the First Parish in Cambridge.

Gentlemen,—It has uniformly been my intention to give an affirmative answer, and no other, to the proposal of the parish for a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, “if regularly called according to the usage of our churches, and to the express desire of the church and other respected parishioners.” If my answer was not fair and equitable, I have yet to learn the first principles of moral and religious obligation : if it was not clear and intelligible, I despair of making it so by note or comment. It was such an answer as, in my apprehension, any pastor of a church, having a proper sense of his obligations to his church and people, and to the Divine Head of the church, would feel himself bound to give ; and if the committee do not receive it, they “interfere with my convictions of duty and rights of conscience.” I must therefore refer you, gentlemen of the committee, to my communication of the 28th of January, for the answer of

Yours respectfully,

A. HOLMES.

Cambridge, March 14, 1825.

On the 18th of March, the pastor received the following communication :

To the Rev. Dr. Holmes, Pastor of the First Parish in Cambridge.

Sir,—The committee appointed by said parish to propose to you a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, met yesterday, and voted to request you to inform them in *what way and manner*, and in *what degree*, you consider said parish bound, by the general ecclesiastical usage, to unite with your church, in relation to the proposed Council, both as to the election of that Council, and the hearing of our case before it.

The church have claimed rights, in relation to the proposed Council, and you have made a corresponding claim in their behalf ; but that claim has not been defined in their memorial to said parish, nor in the communications we have received from you. You, sir, have stated to us that the concurrence of your church is necessary to the regularity of the proposed Council ; but you have not stated to us in what that concurrence consists. You will oblige us by informing us definitely what are the rights, claimed by your church, in this case, to which you consider them entitled by said usage ; whether they, separately from you, claim a right to elect members of such Council ; or whether you and they act together in the election, and jointly elect only one half of the members of such Council ; or whether you and they, together, acting jointly, or separately, claim a right to elect two thirds of said members ; and whether, in the hearing before the proposed Council, they claim a right only to act jointly with you, or a right to appear and act separately from you and the parish. It appears to be important, at this time, that the committee of the parish and your church should understand, accurately, what are the particular rights, claimed by your church, in relation to the proposed Council, so far as they wish, or intend, to act as a church, separately from the parish.

By order of said committee,

WILLIAM J. WHIPPLE.

Cambridge, March 18, 1829.

These interrogatories were communicated to the church, which referred them to a committee, whose Report was unanimously adopted, and on the 26th of March communicated with the following note :

To the Committee of the First Parish in Cambridge.

Gentlemen,—Your last communication to me, containing interrogatories concerning the church, was communicated to the church ; and the church's committee, to whom it was referred, made the enclosed Report, which was unanimously adopted. Addressed as it is to me, with liberty to make such use of it as I might think proper, I transmit it to you, gentlemen, and am

Yours respectfully,

A. HOLMES.

*The First Church in Cambridge, to their Rev. and beloved Pastor,
A. Holmes, D. D.*

Rev. and dear sir,—The communication made to you, on the 18th of this month, by the parish committee appointed to confer with you upon the calling of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, and laid before us, by you, on the 22d of this month, has been duly considered.

We are not aware, sir, of more than one way in which the only question in that communication, which is material, and requiring present attention, could have been answered by you, had you felt authorized to reply to it. But as your office of pastor does not oblige, or even empower you, so to do, without first advising with the church ; as questions *incidental* to our *rights* are contained in the communication, and you are desired to go into particular definitions and explanations of these incidental matters, and of whatever may be included in our claim to have a concurrent voice in the calling of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council ; and as you are requested to state in what '*way*' the church, in the exercise of its rights, may see fit to appear before that Council, and in what '*manner*' and '*degree*' to present and urge those rights ; the propriety and expediency of your laying the communications before us, and of our addressing you at this time, are perfectly obvious.

In the memorial of this church, presented at the parish meeting of the 22d December last, the church goes upon its *right* to a concurrent voice in the calling of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, and does not simply, or mainly, take the course of "suggesting the *expediency* of such concurrence," as stated in the record of the doings of that meeting ;—of which fact, however, the parish committee seem now aware—as in this, their last, communication to you, now before us, they say, "The church have claimed rights in relation to the proposed Council, and you have made a corresponding claim on their behalf:"—which remark must refer to the before mentioned memorial, as it is the only communication ever made by the church to the parish.

Our memorial, then, being sufficiently distinct upon this point, even had we supposed the parish thought our right to include larger powers than it actually did include, and, therefore, considered by them a greater obstacle in their way than it was in fact, we should have esteemed it indecorous towards the parish, to have entered into explanations, as inducements with them to allow us the free exercise

of our mere rights; for this would have been presupposing a willingness on their part to weigh expediency against principle.

It was not necessary, therefore, and it would hardly have been proper, along with the simple assertion of our existence as a church having a right to a concurrent voice in the calling of a Council, to have gone into all the definitions of that right, or the "*way, manner, and degree*" in which it might be thought best that right should be exercised.

In relation to the questions put to you in the communication before us, it will be recollected, sir, that the parish have hitherto refused to acknowledge our existence as a body having any concern in the matters now in agitation—that they even declined recognizing us so far as to allow our memorial to them, urging our right, to go upon the parish files. And, sir, in the communications of the parish committee to you, (which, at the request of our committee, you have obligingly submitted to our perusal, that we might act more understandingly upon the subject,) we find it said, in that of the 9th February last,—“You must be aware, sir, that this subject was fully discussed at the last parish meeting, and it was then decided, by a very large majority, that the parish could not consider the church as a party to this affair. Deriving our authority from the parish, we must of course be governed by their decisions, and we have no power of proposing a mutual Council, except on the terms prescribed by their vote.—Had we the power, however, we do not hesitate to state that our principles would not permit us to adopt any other course than that prescribed by the parish.” And in their communication, made so late as the 5th of the present month, referring you to the above communication, they continue,—“In our communication addressed to you, dated the 9th February, A. D. 1829, we stated to you, among other things, that your church could not be admitted as a party, in relation to the proposed Council, and gave you our reasons for rejecting the church as such party.”

Under these circumstances, it would evidently be a sufficient reply, sir, to the questions from the parish committee, to inquire for what object they could be put, or to what purpose they could be answered, so long as the very existence of the body, as to the subjects to which they relate, is not admitted by the parish, or by the very committee putting the questions, but, on the contrary, has been distinctly denied by both,—and while, too, the parish committee declare they are not authorized by the parish to recognize the church?

But, sir, anxious as we are, and ever have been, that all occasion of delay or difficulty should be taken out of the way, we prefer passing by this very peculiar state of the circumstances, and going into the subject, so far as we can with any propriety at this time.

We are at a loss to conjecture how the parish committee could ever have imagined that church *rights* and *usages* could give to any church a power which would take from the complaining party a right of *equal* representation in a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, and how our claim to a *concurrent* voice with one of the parties in the calling of such Council, could ever have been supposed by them to be the assertion of a right to deprive them of their one half of such representation. To us it seems to contradict the very term *mutual*; and were it not that the question has been just put to you by that

committee with so apparent seriousness, had we inquired of them whether they entertained such an opinion, we should have looked for no other answer than a mere expression of surprise; and it is with the greatest difficulty that we can bring ourselves to believe, that either you or we should have been thought to have laid claim to such powers and rights.

We cannot find that either of us, in speaking of our several rights, has used expressions that could lead to so singular a supposition. On the other hand, so far as our language may at all relate to the point, it implies the contrary, and asks no more than a *concurrent voice with one* of the parties; and we have, of necessity, from the beginning, and till this last communication of the parish committee, considered the language of both parish and committee to be—"We neither acknowledge nor know any church in this matter."

If, then, the committee have labored under such a mistake, we have only to regret that it should have been brought to light for the first time, at this late day; and we shall regret its late disclosure still more, if it has, in fact, been the occasion of delay in settling difficulties which both you and we have long sincerely desired to have brought regularly and speedily to a close.

As to the remaining questions proposed by the parish committee, it appears to us that they relate to matters of merely mutual agreement and accommodation, and not at all to concern the *right* of the church to a concurrent voice in the calling of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council; and that answers to them must, more or less, take their character from the course which the parish committee may see fit to pursue in their future proceedings. It would, therefore, be untimely and improper to reply to them here.

We would remind you, sir, that the committee, (of which Dea. Hilliard is chairman,) chosen by the church on the 21st December last, to present our memorial, herein referred to, which was laid before the parish meeting on the 22d of the same month, were constituted with full powers to enter into agreements, and make all necessary arrangements with the parish, or its committee, in relation to the calling of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, and that they are still a committee for that purpose.

We must close, sir, with saying, that if the parish committee shall, at any time, express to us a readiness to communicate with us as a church having a concurrent voice in the calling of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, they will find us with the same feelings and views as we declared ourselves to entertain, in our memorial to the parish, and ready, through our committee, to join with them, in so far as said parish committee is authorized, in doing all in our power to bring subsisting difficulties to a regular and proper close, and that at as little expense and in as short a time as possible, and in a true spirit of accommodation.

With liberty to make such use of this communication as you may deem fitting and expedient,

We remain respectfully your's,

WILLIAM HILLIARD,	} Committee.
JAMES MUNROE,	
RICHARD H. DANA,	
S. F. SAWYER,	
JONA. C. PRENTISS,	

Cambridge, March 24, 1829.

The following communication, dated the 1st of April, was received on the following day :

To the Rev. Dr. Holmes, Pastor of the First Parish in Cambridge.

Sir,—We, the committee of said parish, have received your letter of the 26th of March last, inclosing a communication to you from the church in this parish, as your answer to our letter to you of the 18th of that month.

Our last communication to you was suggested by a desire, on our part, to avoid a misunderstanding of the views entertained by you, respecting the rights and agency, to which you considered said church entitled, in the election of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, proposed by us, as such committee, to you, as pastor of said parish, for the purpose of terminating the difficulties between you and said parish.

In the communication of said church to you, which you have sent to us, as your answer, it is said, that said "church claims no more than a concurrent voice with one of the parties." If by this is meant, that the church is not to be considered, in itself, a party, in relation to said proposed Council and to the case between you and said parish, proposed for the consideration and decision of said Council, but only claims a right to be consulted by you, as its minister, and to give its advice, when asked, or to furnish assistance to you, when its aid is requested by you, in relation to the election of that Council, or in any other matter, said parish has no inclination, nor right, probably, to object. To us, as such committee of said parish, is certainly not committed the power, or right, of determining of whom you, Rev. sir, shall take either advice or assistance.

In your communication of the 14th of March last to this committee, you say, "it has been uniformly my intention to give an affirmative answer, and no other, to the proposal of the parish for a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, if regularly called according to the usage of our churches, and to the express desires of the church and other respected parishioners." We, as such committee aforesaid, have already several times proposed to you, Rev. sir, a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, to be elected by us, as such committee of said parish, on one part, and by you, as such pastor as aforesaid, on the other, for the purposes heretofore expressed in said proposals, and above mentioned; and we anticipated, sir, that you would, without doubt or hesitation, inform us whether you would accept said proposal by us, or whether you declined accepting it.

We, as such committee as aforesaid of said parish, now repeat and renew our former proposals to you, for such mutual Ecclesiastical Council, for the purposes expressed in said proposals and above mentioned, to be elected as lastly above mentioned; *you* and *said parish* being the *only parties* to the same; and respectfully request you to give us an explicit answer to this renewed proposal.

We, as such committee as aforesaid, are ready to meet you, at any convenient time and place to be named by you, for the purpose of electing the Council herein proposed to you, if you accede to the proposal; but, if you decline it, we, as such committee as aforesaid, shall, as soon as convenient, in discharge of our duty to said parish, elect and call an *ex parte* Council, for the purpose aforesaid, that the

complaints of said parish against you may be fully heard and considered by such Council, and their result be obtained thereon.

Per order of said committee,

WILLIAM J. WHIPPLE.

Cambridge, April 1, 1829.

On the 8th of April, the pastor transmitted to the committee of the parish a second communication from the church, with the following note :

To the Committee of the First Parish in Cambridge.

Gentlemen,—The paper which I last enclosed to you, relating to your interrogatories concerning the rights of the church, was not, as you have entitled it, *my* answer to those interrogatories, but the statement of the church. The church have asserted their right to take a part in the proposed measure of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, and assigned their reasons; and with their rights, as I early observed to you, I am not at liberty to interfere.

By the paper lately transmitted to you, gentlemen, you distinctly perceive, that the church have never claimed a right that would interfere with your right to elect one half of the proposed Council. This, it appears, was the only thing which the church considered as essential to be stated in reply to your inquiries.

The doubtful manner in which—in your letter of April 1st—you speak of what may be meant by a concurrent voice of the church, rendered it proper for me, in order to prevent a misunderstanding of their views, to communicate your letter to the committee of the church. The answer of the committee, though addressed to me, properly belongs to you, gentlemen, and to you I accordingly enclose it. I have only to observe upon it, that the proposal of the church respecting the calling of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, contained in the enclosed paper, meets my approbation; and that, in accordance with it, I am prepared, at any time, to unite with the committee of the parish in calling such a Council.

If, in this procedure, gentlemen of the committee, you are not authorized to recognize the church, your constituents, if they see fit, can doubtless give you such authority. I therefore request you to communicate to the parish my answer of the 28th of January, with the enclosed, for their consideration; and am, gentlemen,

Yours respectfully,

A. HOLMES.

Cambridge, April 8, 1829.

To the Rev. Dr. Holmes, Pastor of the First Church in Cambridge.

Rev. and dear Sir,—You having laid before us a communication from the parish committee to you, bearing date the 1st of this month, in consequence of the committee's having, in that communication, expressed a doubt as to the meaning of that part of our letter to you of the 24th of March last, in which we claim a right to a concurrent voice with one of the parties in the calling of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council—in order to put our meaning beyond all doubt in the minds of that committee, we beg leave to observe, that we did mean more than the language of the committee seems to imply, when they say—

"In the communication of said church to you, which you have sent to us, as your answer, it is said that said church claims 'no more than a concurrent voice with one of the parties.' If by this is meant, that the church is not to be considered, in itself, a party, in relation to said proposed Council, and to the case between you and said parish, proposed for the consideration and decision of said Council, but only claims a right to be consulted by you, as its minister, and to give its advice, when asked, or to furnish assistance to you, when its aid is requested by you, in relation to the election of that Council, or in any other matter, said parish has no inclination, nor any right, probably, to object. To us, as such committee of said parish, is certainly not committed the power or right of determining of whom you, Rev. sir, shall take either advice or assistance."—And we, the church committee, would now state, on the point of the calling of a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, that the church claim that their committee, in concurrence with you, their pastor, should select, with you, one half of the Council, the parish committee selecting the other half. And, to make our meaning perfectly clear, we would further say, that, as to the mode of calling said Council, the church would be satisfied, if the half selected by you and the church committee, be invited by letters signed by you, as pastor, and the church committee; and the half selected by the parish committee be invited by letters signed by the parish committee, or, if the parish committee prefer it, that all selected, (including those selected by you and the church committee, on the one part, and those selected by the parish committee, on the other part) be invited by letters signed unitedly by you, as pastor, by the church committee, and by the parish committee.

With liberty to make such use of this letter as you may deem proper, we remain,

Rev. and dear sir, yours,

WILLIAM HILLIARD,	} Committee.
JAMES MUNROE,	
RICHARD H. DAÑA,	
S. F. SAWYER,	
JONA. C. PRENTISS,	

Cambridge, April 7, 1829.

On the 13th of April, the committee addressed the following letter to the pastor :

Sir,—The committee of said parish have received your communication of the 8th of April instant, enclosing a communication to you from a committee of the first church in Cambridge, under date of the 7th of said month.

After the repeated attempts on the part of the parish committee to obtain from you an explicit and direct reply to their proposition for a mutual Ecclesiastical Council, they confidently expected a definite and decisive answer to their communication of April 1st. After their explicit declaration under the last mentioned date, they consider you as refusing to agree to their proposal for such Council; and, agreeably to their statement in their last communication to you, they will proceed to the choice of an *ex parte* Council, to hear and decide on the complaints of the parish.

They decline applying to the parish for a grant of further authority to the committee, because the claims of the church to be a party in calling a Council has been already very fully discussed, deliberately considered, and decided by the parish; and because they believe there is nothing in either or both of the papers you wish communicated, to induce the parish to alter their decision so fully expressed on this subject.

Per order of the committee of said parish,

WILLIAM J. WHIPPLE.

Cambridge, April 13, 1829.

On the 9th of May, the following letter was addressed
To the Rev. Dr. Holmes, Pastor of the First Parish in Cambridge.

Sir,—I am directed by the committee of said parish to make known to you, that said committee have elected and invited the Rev. Dr. Ripley of Concord, Rev. Dr. Thayer of Lancaster, Rev. Dr. Bancroft of Worcester, Rev. Dr. Porter of Roxbury, Rev. Dr. Flint of Salem, Rev. Dr. Parker of Portsmouth, and Rev. Dr. Nichols of Portland, together with a delegate from each of their respective churches, to compose an ex parte Ecclesiastical Council, to assemble at the Old Court-house in Cambridge, on the nineteenth day of May instant, at 10 o'clock, A. M., for the purposes expressed in the introduction to the enclosed paper. I am also directed to transmit to you a copy of the Complaint by said parish, through their committee, which said committee propose to exhibit to said Council, which is enclosed herein.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WILLIAM J. WHIPPLE, in behalf of said Committee.

Cambridge, May 9, 1829.

ABSTRACT OF THE COMPLAINT.

"To the Ecclesiastical Council, elected and invited by the First Parish in Cambridge, through the agency of their Committee, duly chosen and appointed by said parish for that purpose, to hear and advise in relation to the controversies and difficulties existing between said parish, and the Rev. Dr. Holmes, their pastor, in relation to his pastoral conduct in said parish."

After a long preamble, the committee proceed to allege against their minister eight specific charges, or articles of complaint. The first is, "the great innovation exhibited by said pastor, in his practice in relation to ministerial exchanges"—having adopted "the Calvinistic exclusive system, and exchanged with Calvinists or self-styled Orthodox preachers only, and entirely excluded clergymen of the liberal denomination from *our* pulpit, and thereby reduced a great majority of his parishioners to the necessity of leaving the meeting house," "or of hearing only that kind of theology which they sincerely believe to be mixed with *much erroneous theory, and mere human invention, equally opposed to sound and enlightened reason, and to a true interpretation and correct understanding of divine revelation.*"

The second charge relates to the introduction of lectures into the parish "on Sabbath evening, and on one other evening in the week," "in opposition to the religious principles" of a majority of his parishioners, and intended to proselyte them to the "*harsh, unreasonable, and unscriptural creed*" of the Calvinists.

The third charge relates to the refusal of Dr. Holmes to listen to the request of the parish, that he would exchange with ministers of the liberal denomination; or that he would "consent to the settlement of such a colleague as would be satisfactory to the parish;" or that he would permit the parish to invite such clergymen as they pleased "to preach in the meeting house on the Sabbath, not exceeding one half of the time;" or that he would permit the parish to invite such clergyman as they pleased "to deliver lectures in the pulpit, at such times as said parish may appoint."

The fourth charge respects the refusal of Dr. Holmes to listen to the request of the parish, that he would "discontinue his evening lectures," as also "his exchanges with clergymen of the Calvinistic denomination;" or "in case he did not comply with the said requests, to ask a dismissal from his office of pastor of said parish." Under this article, the committee of the parish declare their belief, that "the tenets of Calvinism, according to the *present Calvinistic creed*," are "not only *opposed to reason and the sacred scriptures, but TO ALL PURE AND TRUE RELIGION, TO MORAL RECTITUDE AND PIETY.*"

The fifth charge respects the refusal of Dr. Holmes "to reject Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns," and "to substitute therefore the collection used in the chapel of Harvard University." Under this article, the Calvinistic tenets are represented as "*entirely false, and dangerous and pernicious in their tendency.*"

The sixth charge alleges, that Dr. Holmes "has claimed *immutability* in his own religious theories, and has alleged a change of religious principles in the majority of his parishioners, and in the liberal ministers with whom, or with whose predecessors, he formerly exchanged;" and it asserts, that his parishioners, and "that said liberal ministers, have *not changed* their religious principles," but that, "if there has been any considerable change in religious theories or principles, it has been in Dr. Holmes and his denomination."

Dr. Holmes is charged, in the seventh place, with a neglect of pastoral visits, which neglect is attributed to his "multiplied labors in a large number of societies, associations, *consociations*, &c.," and to his great zeal, industry, and perseverance in historical and other pursuits and investigations.*

The eighth and last charge alleges, that Dr. Holmes "has alienated the affections and lost the confidence of a large majority of his parishioners, and wholly disqualified himself for usefulness in respect to them," having "excited in their minds a determination not to hear him."

In conclusion, the committee express their fear, "if Dr. Holmes shall continue to be pastor of the parish," that "his zeal, boldness, and firm resolution in support of his innovations will destroy permanently the peace, harmony and prosperity of said parish, will greatly reduce its numbers, and do it an irreparable injury."

Without remarking on the various misrepresentations occurring in this complaint, it is manifest on the face of it, that nothing from the first would have satisfied the

* This charge the Council refused to consider. It is doubted whether Dr. H. ever had the least connexion with a consociation—never, certainly, since he became the minister of Cambridge.

leading opposers of Dr. Holmes, except his removal. Dr. H. is, and uniformly has been, a Calvinistic or orthodox minister. With this fact, let the reader compare the views above expressed relative to what are called "the tenets of Calvinism;" and let him judge for himself, whether those who entertain such views would have remained quietly, year after year, under the ministry of such a teacher. Would they, *could* they, have remained under the ministry of one, who, in their judgment, taught a system "*not only opposed to reason, and the sacred scriptures, but to all pure and true religion, to moral rectitude and piety*"—a system "*entirely false, and dangerous and pernicious in its tendency!*"* Whatever pretences may have been made, the object, from the first, has undoubtedly been to procure the dismissal of Dr. Holmes; and at no period, it is confidently believed, would any thing short of this have satisfied the leaders of the opposition.

But further: the head and front of Dr. Holmes's offending has been, that, after long hesitation and indulgence, he at length felt himself constrained to decline exchanges with avowed Unitarian ministers; and the public will see, in the foregoing complaint, the hollowness and insufficiency of such a ground of offence. What are the views entertained by Unitarians respecting the Calvinistic or orthodox faith? They regard it as "*not only opposed to reason and the sacred scriptures, but to all pure and true religion, to moral rectitude and piety*"—"a harsh, unreasonable, unscriptural creed"—as "*entirely false, and dangerous and pernicious in its tendency.*" And do they really wish to exchange with men who hold and teach such a system of religion? Do they wish to put men into their pulpits to inculcate such a faith—to teach such doctrines? This complaint on the subject of exchanges is certainly a most ridiculous one. The *Orthodox* regard Unitarians as having *departed from the essential doctrines of the gospel*, and it is on this account that they decline exchanges with them. They feel that they could not act with any appearance of consistency, as honest and faithful

* If orthodox principles are of such "dangerous and pernicious tendency," so opposed "to all pure and true religion, to moral rectitude and piety," it is strange that the faithful preaching of them should produce so good effects. Witness the effects produced by the preaching of the fathers of New England. Witness, the effects produced by the preaching of all the venerable ministers of Cambridge, since the church was established.

men, if they did otherwise. But while Unitarians regard the Orthodox as holding a system which is “not only opposed to reason and the sacred scriptures, but to all pure and true religion, to moral rectitude and piety”—a system “entirely false, and dangerous and pernicious in its tendency,” they are most inconsistently urging an exchange of pulpits, and are harassing, censuring, and dismissing venerable and faithful men, because they cannot in conscience yield to their wishes !

PROTEST.

To the Rev. Ezra Ripley, D. D., to be communicated to the ministers and delegates, assembled by invitation of a committee of the first parish in Cambridge, to inquire into and decide upon complaints intended to be alleged against me.

I have received notice of your being called to sit this day as an ex parte Council, to hear certain complaints which, it is understood, are to be preferred against me by a committee of the parish of which I am minister. Having been always willing, having uniformly expressed my willingness, and being still willing, to concur in the calling of a mutual Council in such manner as has been generally practised among the Congregational churches and parishes in New England,—I feel myself in duty bound to deny the jurisdiction of an ex parte Council ; and I do therefore protest against the power and authority of this Council to take any cognizance of any complaint which may be made against me by any committee or other persons of my parish, and against all and every proceeding which may be adopted, or proposed to be adopted, on the subject of any such complaint.

ABIEL HOLMES, Pastor of the First
Church and Society in Cambridge.

Cambridge, May 19, 1829.

PROTEST OF THE PARISH.

To the Rev. Ecclesiastical Council, convened and holden in the first parish in Cambridge, on the 19th day of May, by letters missive from a committee of said parish, and in virtue of the authority given to said committee, by the parish in their vote of the 22d of December, A. D. 1828, “to call an ex parte Council, to advise in relation to all differences and matters in controversy, existing between Dr. Holmes and said parish before such Council, and to adopt and pursue all suitable and legal measures in relation to a settlement of said difficulties, or a dissolution of the connexion existing between the said Holmes and said parish.”

We the subscribers, members of, and legal voters, in the said first parish of Cambridge, do hereby respectfully and solemnly enter our Protest against the proceedings of the Ecclesiastical Council, thus convened, for the following reasons, viz. :—

1. Because the Rev. Dr. Holmes, the present incumbent, was settled in the first parish in Cambridge, by the united and concurrent voice of the church and society in said parish, without any conditions, limitations or restrictions.

2. Because, that in all the propositions which have been made to the parish in their several meetings, and which have by them been adopted, no allegations have been made against Dr. Holmes for immoral conduct, a neglect of his ministerial or parochial duties, or a change of doctrines; the only three grounds, as we humbly conceive, upon which an Ecclesiastical Council can proceed to dissolve the connexion subsisting between a minister and his people, except by mutual consent, by the parish.

3. Because the several proposals submitted to Rev. Dr. Holmes, for his adoption, prior to the call of a Council, were of such a nature as he had a right to accept or reject, in perfect accordance with the tenure by which he holds his office, and by an independent exercise of the rights of private judgment.

4. Because we believe that no individual, or body of men, civil or ecclesiastical, under our government, have a right to pass any law, edict, or rule, which will serve to impair or destroy the obligations of contracts, without violating one of the most important provisions of the Constitution.

5. Because in the act "incorporating the Trustees of the Ministerial Fund of the First Parish in Cambridge," it is provided "that the annual income of said fund shall be appropriated to the support of such Congregational minister or ministers as shall be regularly ordained and settled in said parish, by the joint concurrence of the inhabitants and church thereof."

6. Because the right of the committee of the parish, by virtue of their vote passed on the 22d day of December last, does not exist, Dr. Holmes never having refused to unite in the call of a mutual Council.

7. Because the parish, according [contrary] to ecclesiastical usage, by their vote passed 22d December, 1828, refused to receive the memorial of the church, by them nearly unanimously adopted, and of the minority of the parish, the purport of which was, that the church, as such, should unite with the parish and the pastor, in the call of a mutual Council, according to ancient and immemorial usage.

8. Because, as we humbly conceive, all the parties originally concerned in the call and settlement of a minister, are justly entitled, by usage, equity, courtesy, and by law, to a hearing before any tribunal, competent to adopt any measures, tending to dissolve the connexion existing between such minister and his people.

9. Because we apprehend, that a severance of the ties which have so long and so happily subsisted between a faithful pastor and his flock, upon the grounds which in the present case have been alleged, will tend essentially to impair, if not destroy, the foundations upon which our religious institutions rest.

For the foregoing reasons, we the undersigned respectfully request the Council to stay such proceedings in relation to the complaints submitted to their consideration and discussion, as will tend to dissolve the connexion existing between Dr. Holmes and the first church and society in Cambridge;—and that whatever their decision may be, tending to a dissolution of this connexion, they will permit this our Protest to be entered upon their records. And as in duty bound, will ever pray,

Signed by WILLIAM HILLIARD, and twenty-seven others.
Cambridge, May 17, 1829.

A Protest from the church was also presented to the Council, denying their right of proceeding to decide upon the subject submitted to them, and for reasons so similar in substance to the foregoing, that it is deemed unnecessary to publish them at large.

The pastor addressed the following letter to a member of the *ex parte* Council :

To the Rev. ———, D. D.

Rev. and dear Sir,—I have been informed that you are a member of an *ex parte* Council, assembled here to-day to hear certain complaints which are to be preferred against me by a committee of my parish. You will perceive by my protest, that I wholly decline the jurisdiction of this *ex parte* Council.

In a formal paper, like a protest, it did not seem necessary that I should do more than object generally to all its proceedings, and deny, in terms, its authority. I am entirely willing, however, my dear sir, to present to you, as a friend of long standing, a brief state of the facts of the case, which have governed my conduct.

I think the Council has no jurisdiction, because it is *ex parte*, and because no cause exists for summoning an *ex parte* Council.

I. Because in the proceedings of the parish, which have issued in your being asked to sit as an *ex parte* Council, the church in this parish have neither been invited, nor permitted, to have any part, although from the first proposal of a Council, and uniformly since, they have expressed their desire, both to the parish and to the pastor, to unite in calling a mutual Council, and claimed merely a concurrent voice, on the ground of equity and ecclesiastical usage; and other parishioners have, in like manner, expressed, in a Memorial to the parish, the same desire of the concurrent voice of the church. Such concurrence is believed to be requisite from ecclesiastical usage, and from the mode of my settlement in this parish.

1. From ecclesiastical usage. The congregational churches, from the beginning, have been accustomed to have a distinct voice in all proceedings relating to the settlement and dismissal of ministers, or the preferring of complaints against them; and in cases affecting their rights and privileges.

2. From the mode of my settlement. I was called to the pastoral and ministerial office in this church and congregation by the distinct and concurrent votes of the church and of the parish. The church was a party to the contract which has so long subsisted between myself and this people. The church therefore, as well as the parish, ought, I apprehend, to be a party to any measures tending to the dissolution of that relation, and to have the opportunity, at least, of giving, by a distinct voice, their concurrence in those measures.

II. Because a mutual ecclesiastical Council has not been declined on my part. The uniform ecclesiastical usage in this State renders the calling of an *ex parte* Council proper and valid, only when a regular mutual Council has been declined. The parish have, through their committee, proposed to me a mutual Council: But I have not declined a mutual Council; on the contrary, I have distinctly and re-

peatedly declared my consent to such a Council, should it be regularly called, and my readiness to co-operate with the committee in calling such a Council. That I have never declined such a Council, may be seen by my first answer of the 28th of January last to the parish, and by all my subsequent communications on that subject. From these communications it may also be seen, that, while I have expressed to the committee my desire that the church might have a concurrent voice in calling the Council, I have never yet, in point of fact, refused a mutual Council, to be chosen in the manner which the parish have preferred. However I might have ultimately decided that question, I thought it my duty to state to the committee of the parish the manner in which I considered the Council should be chosen, and to request them to lay before the parish my answer to their proposal, expressive of my wishes upon the subject, which they have declined to do; and while the claims of the church were, as I supposed, in discussion before the committee of the parish, they broke off the discussion, and called an *ex parte* Council.—In these circumstances I have supposed that ministers would not consent to sit as upon an Ecclesiastical Council; but, however they may decide on that for themselves, it is clear, in my opinion, that their proceedings would not be valid.

Permit me to add: The introduction of an *ex parte* Council, in this case, would, I apprehend, be a departure from such usage as has become the common law of our churches, and would furnish a precedent, which, if followed and sanctioned, might violate, or impair, the obligation of the most solemn contracts, and deprive our churches of those invaluable rights, the enjoyment and maintenance of which were the primary object of our forefathers in forming the first settlement of New England.

Believing, my dear sir, that you will receive this communication in the friendly spirit in which it is written,

I am your's truly, with respect and regard,

A. HOLMES.

Cambridge, 19th May, 1829.

RESULT OF THE EX PARTE COUNCIL.

Cambridge, May 19, A. D. 1829.

In pursuance of letters missive from a committee of the first parish in Cambridge, an ecclesiastical Council assembled in the old Court-house, to hear and advise in relation to difficulties and matters in controversy existing between said parish and the Rev. Abiel Holmes, D. D. their pastor; and continued in session, by adjournments, till May 21st.

Concord, *Ezra Ripley, D. D.*—Deacon *Reuben Brown, jr.*
 Roxbury, *Eliphalet Porter, D. D.*—Deacon *William Davis.*
 Worcester, *Aaron Bancroft, D. D.*—Brother *Samuel M. Burnside.*
 Lancaster, *Nathaniel Thayer, D. D.*—Deacon *Joel Wilder.*
 Salem, *James Flint, D. D.*—Brother *Zechariah F. Silsbee.*
 Portsmouth, *Nathan Parker, D. D.*

The Council organized by the appointment of *Ezra Ripley, D. D.*
 Moderator.

Nathaniel Thayer, D. D. Scribe.

Brother *Samuel M. Burnside*, Assistant Scribe.

The Rev. Moderator led the Council in prayer.

A communication, delivered to the Rev. Dr. Ripley, from the Rev. Dr. Holmes, denying the jurisdiction of this Council, was read, with certain papers designed by members of the church and parish as a remonstrance against the continued sessions and proceedings of this Council. Whereupon *Voted*, That the Rev. Dr. Porter and Brother Zechariah F. Silsbee be a committee to wait upon and inform the Rev. Dr. Holmes, that this Council have received and read the communication made by him; by the committee of the church; and by individuals of the parish; and will be happy to receive from them, either by person or in writing, any further information, which he or they shall think it proper to introduce.

The committee reported that they had waited upon the Rev. Dr. Holmes; were kindly received; and were told by him, that he had no further communication to make to this Council.

On the part of the committee of the parish, their proceedings in relation to the Rev. Dr. Holmes were introduced, accompanied by various communications which passed to and from said committee and Rev. Dr. Holmes; bringing to view the conditions, upon which he and a majority of the members of his church would consent to the calling of a mutual Council.

Voted, unanimously, That Dr. Holmes has declined a compliance with the request of the parish to call a mutual Council; except upon conditions, with which the parish could not comply, consistently with their rights.*

Attended also to a paper, purporting to be a complaint forwarded by a committee of the parish to Dr. Holmes; and to the papers, forming a correspondence between him and his parishioners.

Attended also to the reading of extracts from several pamphlets produced with a view to communicate to this Council the history of this parish and their former ministers, the Rev. Dr. Appleton and the Rev. Mr. Hilliard; to evince the spirit of Dr. Holmes in past years, and the rules by which he believed it indispensable that a christian minister should be guided; and to possess them of all facts requisite to a competent knowledge and judgment of the case submitted to them.

A number of witnesses were introduced, who testified to the following points, viz. that for about three years past, the intercourse of the Rev. Dr. Holmes with his brethren in the ministry had been of an exclusive character; that candidates and ministers who were previously introduced into his pulpit had been excluded by him; that the preaching of the Rev. Dr. Holmes had become uncharitable and denunciatory†; that these several causes had alienated the affections

* Consistently with what rights? With the right to choose half the members of the proposed Council? No; for this right was expressly admitted to them. With the right to be heard fairly, and fully, and in any manner they pleased, before the proposed Council? No; for this right never was disputed, and would not have been. What right of the parish then would have been yielded, if they had assented to the proposal of Dr. Holmes and the church? Obviously no right at all; unless it be contended that the parish have a right to trample on the church at pleasure.

† The witness who testified "that the preaching of Dr. Holmes had become uncharitable and denunciatory," is a gentleman who was dismissed

of a majority of the parish, and tended to the injury and dissolution of the society.

The Hon. Samuel Hoar, in behalf of the parish, then presented before the Council, in its various relations and bearings, the controversy between the parish and the Rev. Dr. Holmes; and closed his address with a submission of the question, Is it expedient, proper and just that the relation of the Rev. Dr. Holmes to the first parish in Cambridge, as their pastor, be dissolved?

After deliberating upon and reviewing the facts and various evidence offered for our consideration and decision, the Council adopt the following votes:

Voted, That there is plenary evidence of the facts, that Dr. Holmes has materially varied in his ministerial and christian intercourse from that of his two immediate predecessors, and from that of more than thirty years of his own ministry;* that such change more essentially affects the peace, comfort and edification of the parish than any mere change in speculation or in points of dogmatical theology; that this change has been persisted in, contrary to repeated remonstrances of a large majority of the parish, consisting of about three fourths of the legal voters, including several members of the church; that this

from the first church in Cambridge to join the church in Harvard College, in 1814. He has stated to Dr. Holmes, since the Council, that *he did not use the word "denunciatory," and should not use it.* But on more recent and particular inquiry by another person, he has admitted, that when asked by a member of the Council whether the preaching of Dr. Holmes had not become uncharitable and denunciatory, he said that *it had*, although he did not himself use the word "denunciatory;" a distinction about words, of which no man not well versed in the *learned languages* would have thought of availing himself! Dr. Holmes denies the charge here made, and appeals to his manuscripts, which may be examined to ascertain whether there can be found in them all a sentence of denunciation against those of other denominations.—The same gentleman stated before the Council, that he had taken the liberty to speak to Dr. Holmes, on the subject of his offensive preaching, by way of *caution*. When this caution was given, the gentleman did not state; and as Dr. Holmes has no recollection of it, the reader, as well as ourselves, must be content to remain in ignorance.

Another prominent witness, a member of the church, stated that "the preaching of Dr. Holmes had become so offensive, that he was induced to worship in other places one half the time;" and in regard to the alleged state of seriousness in the society for some time past, and the admissions to the church, "*that he believed then, and always should believe, that these accessions, and especially when seven were admitted at one time, were the result of a concerted plan for the purpose of making a show.*" This attack upon the character of the pastor, the deacons, a majority of the male members of the church, and upon the seven individuals admitted to the church, is but one amongst the many instances of the melancholy effects of long-indulged and over-wrought feeling. It is hoped, for the sake of the unhappy author of it, that he will be as quick to repent, as those attacked are ready to forgive him.

*The two immediate predecessors of Dr. Holmes never exchanged with avowed Unitarians; and although Dr. H. himself has been slow to believe, in regard to certain individuals, that they were Unitarians, he has never intended to exchange with those who openly avowed the sentiment—and especially with those who rejected, as most Unitarians now do, the doctrines of grace.

course has greatly grieved them; and so far impaired their confidence in their pastor, as to preclude the possibility of continuing his ministerial relation to them, either with comfort to himself, or any prospect of advancing their religious interests.

Voted, That the first parish in Cambridge have sufficient cause to terminate the contract subsisting between them and the Rev. Dr. Holmes as their minister; and this Council recommend the measure as necessary to the existence and spiritual prosperity of the society.

This Council wish it to be distinctly understood, that the service to which we have in providence been called, is one of the most painful services of our life. We do not arraign or condemn the motives of the Rev. Dr. Holmes. We are happy to testify, that all our impressions of his course during the peaceful state of his society are associated with the most interesting and honorable views of his ministerial character and the christian spirit. We sympathize with him under his trials,* and devoutly pray that the consolations and rewards of the religion he has preached may be his inheritance.

We lament with the parish, that the principles and practice of the times on which we have fallen have in any degree interrupted the quiet, and blighted the prospects of a society, which, from the earliest period of its existence, has known how good and how joyful it is for Christians to dwell together in unity.

We honor the members of this parish for the marked deliberation, candor, frankness, veneration for the christian ministry, and for the institutions of the gospel, apparent in all their measures.† We offer them our sympathy and friendly aid. We urge them in the exercise of charity and tenderness to prosecute their future course. We implore for them the guidance and benediction of Heaven, and that this christian community may be built up in faith, order, purity, prosperity, charity and peace.

Voted, unanimously, to accept and publish the above as the result of Council.

EZRA RIPLEY, *Moderator*.

NATHANIEL THAYER, *Scribe*.

SAMUEL M. BURNSIDE, *Assistant Scribe*.

A true copy.—NATHANIEL THAYER, *Scribe*.

As the whole question whether Dr. Holmes has, or has not, been regularly and legally dismissed from the first

*The sympathy here expressed, if felt at all, must have been a feeling of a very extraordinary character;—like the sympathy of him who should knock down his neighbor, and then sympathize with him because he did not stand;—or like the sympathy of him who should take away another's living, and then sympathize with him because he was poor. The Council recommend Dr. Holmes's dismissal, and then sympathize with him because he must be dismissed! They do all in their power to further the designs of his opposers, and add weight to his trials, and then sympathize with him under his trials!

†The readers of the foregoing pages will judge for themselves to how much honor Dr. Holmes's opposers are entitled for the properties here ascribed to them. We shall know too, from henceforth, what measures a Council, of "liberal sentiments," esteem and honor, as the result of "marked deliberation, candor, frankness, veneration for the Christian ministry, and for the institutions of the gospel."

parish in Cambridge depends on the validity of the foregoing result, it will be necessary, at some time, to examine it with particular attention. All we shall attempt at present, will be to state the proper questions respecting it, and to offer a few remarks, tending to lead the public mind to a correct decision.

According to established Ecclesiastical usage, and to the decisions of our Courts, an *ex parte* Council has no jurisdiction, unless it be impartially chosen, and unless a regular mutual Council has been previously offered and refused. Now it will appear from the foregoing papers, that the committee of the parish offered Dr. Holmes a mutual Council, which he did not refuse. So, far from this, he uniformly expressed his *readiness* and his *desire* for a mutual Council, and only wished that the *church*, as a party interested, and as a matter of right, might, if it pleased, be known in the calling of it. Accordingly, Dr. Holmes and the church repeatedly offered to unite with the committee of the parish in calling a mutual Council—a Council of which the said committee should select one half—a Council in which all their rights should be respected; which offer the committee expressly and repeatedly rejected. Dr. Holmes requested the committee to refer this proposal to the parish for consideration, but they refused to do even that. And under these circumstances, they proceeded to call an *ex parte* Council—not an *impartial* one, but one composed entirely of their own *party*—by whom Dr. Holmes's dismissal was authorized and sanctioned.

The questions necessary to be decided, in judging of this subject, are, *What is a regular mutual Council* for the dismissal of a minister—such an one as is agreeable to the usages of Congregational churches, and as has been sanctioned by the Courts of Massachusetts? And *did the committee of the parish offer*, and *did Dr. Holmes refuse, such a Council?* And in deciding these questions, it is not necessary to decide all the questions which may be started, on the subject of Councils. It is not necessary to decide the abstract question, Whether a regular mutual Council for the dismissal of a pastor can be called by the parish and the pastor, *without the church*; though this is a question which our fathers, even down to the last

generation, would have found no difficulty in deciding : For when the church *objects* to the calling of such a Council, and *refuses* to unite in it (as was the case with the church at Sandwich)—or when the church *consents* to the measure, but chooses to *stand aloof*, and have *little to do with it*, (as was the case with the first mutual Council at Dorchester)—it may be admitted that the pastor and parish may call a regular Council ; and still, the question respecting the regularity of the Council proposed by the committee of the first parish in Cambridge remain undecided. For here, the church did not object to a mutual Council, and refuse to unite in it ; nor did they choose to stand aloof, and have nothing to do with it. They wished a mutual Council, offered one, urged one, and only desired, as they were a party vitally interested, that they might, in some proper way, be known in the transaction. And the committee of the parish refused them, rejected them, and would not suffer them to have part or lot in the matter. The proper question to be decided, therefore, in judging of the regularity of the mutual Council proposed by this committee, and consequently of the validity of the doings of the *ex parte* Council, is, not whether a pastor and parish can call a regular mutual Council for the dismissal of the pastor, *when the church objects and refuses to unite*—nor whether a pastor and parish can regularly call such a Council, *when the church consents to the measure, but chooses to have no part in it* ;—but the proper question is, *whether the pastor and parish can regularly call such a Council, when the church neither objects to the measure, nor chooses to stand aloof from it, but wishes and offers to have a proper part in it, and IS REJECTED.* This obviously is the question, on which the validity of Dr. Holmes's dismissal depends ; and *how shall it be decided ?* There can be no doubt how it will be decided by Congregational churches, the world over, if we except a few Unitarian churches, calling themselves Congregational, in and around the metropolis of Massachusetts. But how will it be decided by the Supreme Court of this Commonwealth ? They will undoubtedly be called upon to decide it ; and *what will be their decision ?* On this subject, it does not become us at present so much as to conjecture. One thing is certain, they will have no prece-

dents to guide them to a decision ; as no similar question is known to have been decided by any Court in Massachusetts. It shall be our prayer and hope that they may be guided by that wisdom which is from above.

On the 8th of June, the parish, at a notified meeting, voted to accept the Result of the *ex parte* Council ; and, according to its recommendation, voted and declared the Pastor's connexion with the parish to be dissolved.

ABSTRACT.

At a legal meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of the first parish in Cambridge, in the County of Middlesex, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, qualified by law to vote in parish affairs, held at the Old Court-house in said parish, on Monday the eighth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty nine ;—

“ On the fourth article in the Warrant for the present meeting of said parish, viz. ‘ To hear, and act on, the result of the *ex parte* Ecclesiastical Council, lately elected by said last mentioned committee, for the purpose mentioned in the last preceding article,’ it was

Voted, unanimously, That the result therein mentioned of the Ecclesiastical Council therein mentioned, be, and hereby is, fully approved and accepted by said parish, and that said result and this vote thereon be recorded by the clerk of said parish on the records of said parish.”

“ On the fifth article in the Warrant for this meeting of said parish, viz. ‘ To see if said parish will,—pursuant to said result of said *ex parte* Ecclesiastical Council, and for the reasons and causes therein mentioned,—dismiss the Rev. Dr. Holmes from his office of pastor of said parish, and terminate the contract subsisting between said parish and him, as their pastor, or minister,’ it was

Voted, unanimously, That, pursuant to the result, mentioned in said fifth article, and for the reasons and causes mentioned in said result, the Rev. Dr. Abiel Holmes be, and he hereby is, dismissed from his office of minister of the gospel and teacher of piety, religion and morality in said parish, and that all connexion between said Holmes, as such minister or teacher, and said parish, do and shall henceforth cease.”

“ On the sixth article in the Warrant for the present meeting of said parish, viz. ‘ If said parish shall dismiss the Rev. Dr. Holmes from his office of pastor of said parish, as aforesaid, to see if said parish will appoint a committee to settle with him, in relation to his salary and to all demands by him against said parish, by virtue of the contract between said parish and him, as their pastor, and in relation to all the real estate, whereof he is seized, as such pastor of said parish, and belonging to said parish, or either of them, which said Holmes, as such pastor, now holds and enjoys ; and to pay him what

shall be justly due to him, under and by virtue of said contract, on such settlement, and any other or further sum, which said parish shall, by vote, direct and authorize said last mentioned committee to pay him, or which said parish shall, by vote, grant him, on any equitable principle, although not due to him in strictness of law'—said parish having, by vote, dismissed the Rev. Dr. Holmes from his office of pastor of said parish, as expressed in said vote, it was

Voted, unanimously, That said parish will appoint a committee for the several purposes mentioned in said sixth article ; and said parish, in addition to what is due to said Holmes to this day, further hereby grant to said Holmes, on equitable principles, but not as his legal right, the sum of one hundred and seventy three dollars and eighty two cents, equal to the pecuniary part of the salary, which would have become payable to him, as pastor of said parish, for three months from this eighth day of June current, the day of said meeting, had he not been dismissed as aforesaid, from said office ; and the use and occupation of the several parcels of real estate heretofore holden and enjoyed by him, as such pastor of said parish, until the twenty fifth day of January next, but no longer : which said sum of one hundred and seventy three dollars and eighty two cents, said last mentioned committee are hereby authorized and required to draw from the treasury of said parish, and to deliver and pay to said Holmes, on or before the eighth day of September next, which last mentioned sum of money includes what would be payable both from the treasurer of the parish and from the trustees of the ministerial fund for said three months."

"On the seventh article in the Warrant for this meeting of said parish, viz. 'If said parish shall, as above mentioned, dismiss the Rev. Dr. Holmes from his office of pastor of said parish, to see if said parish will appoint a committee to take care of the meeting house of said parish and the pulpit therein, so far as said meeting house and pulpit shall be necessary, or be wanted, for religious purposes, and to procure and employ, for said parish, a suitable preacher, or preachers, to supply said pulpit, and to pay such preacher, or preachers, for supplying said pulpit, by drawing orders on the treasurer of said parish, or otherwise, as shall be expedient.'—Said parish having, by vote, dismissed the Rev. Dr. Holmes from his office of pastor of said parish, as expressed in the vote of said parish, this day passed on the fifth article in said Warrant, it was

Voted, unanimously, That said parish will, and they do, hereby appoint a committee to take care of the meeting house of said parish and the pulpit therein, so far as said meeting house and pulpit shall be necessary, or be wanted, for religious purposes, and to procure and employ, for said parish, a suitable preacher, or preachers, to supply said pulpit, and to pay such preacher, or preachers, for supplying said pulpit, by drawing orders on the treasurer of said parish, or otherwise, as shall be expedient."

A true copy from the records of the first parish in Cambridge.

Attest, WILLIAM J. WHIPPLE, Clerk of said Parish.

The result of the *ex parte* Council having been adopted, a committee was appointed to communicate the transactions of this meeting to the pastor.

The parish clerk made a communication, to which the pastor replied as follows :

Sir,—I received yesterday, through you, as the parish clerk, a certified copy of the votes of the parish, passed on the 8th instant. By these votes I perceive that my connexion with the parish, as their minister, is declared to be dissolved, and that a dismission, in pursuance of the Result of the *ex parte* Council, recently called by said parish, is supposed to take place. As I have previously entered my Protest against the jurisdiction of said Council, and have denied their right to take any cognizance of the complaint exhibited against me by said parish, I now give notice to you, and, through you, to the inhabitants of said parish, that I still consider myself as the lawful minister of said parish, and do hold myself ready to perform any and all the duties, in or out of the pulpit, which belong to my office as Pastor of the First Church and Society in Cambridge.

Yours,

A. HOLMES.

P. S. You are requested to communicate this to the committee of the parish authorized to take cognizance of this subject ; and I ask the favour of an early answer.

A. H.

Cambridge, 11th June, 1829.

To the Rev. Dr. Holmes.

Sir,—In your letter, dated 11th June, 1829, addressed to William J. Whipple, Esq. and by him communicated to the subscribers, the committee of the first parish in Cambridge “who have cognizance of the subject” mentioned in that letter, you acknowledge the receipt of “a certified copy of the votes of the parish, passed on the 8th instant,” and you deny the jurisdiction of the *ex parte* Council therein mentioned, and the legality of your dismission from the office of pastor of said parish by one of said votes, pursuant to the result of said Council ; and you notify the inhabitants of said parish, that you still consider yourself “as the lawful minister of the parish, and hold” yourself “ready to perform any and all duties, in and out of the pulpit, which belong to” your “office, as pastor of the first church and society in Cambridge.” In answer to your said letter, said committee, in behalf of said parish, state to you, that said Council had jurisdiction of the complaint exhibited to said Council against you ; that said result is legal and valid ; that said dismission from said office conforms to said result and to law ; that your connexion with said parish as their minister is legally dissolved ; that you are not the minister, or pastor, of said parish ; nor have you been such minister, or pastor, since said dismission ; that as such minister, or pastor, you do not owe any such duties as aforesaid to said parish, and that said parish refuses to accept from you any service, or services, as such minister, or pastor, thereof. Hereafter you cannot occupy nor use the pulpit in the meeting house of said parish,

as it will be exclusively appropriated to such preacher, or preachers, as said parish shall employ to supply it.

We are, sir, respectfully, your obedient servants,

ABRAHAM HILLIARD,	} Committee.
ABEL WHITNEY,	
JOSEPH HOLMES,	
FRAS. DANA,	
SYLVANUS PLYMPTON,	
WILLIAM J. WHIPPLE,	
JOB WYTTE,	

Cambridge, June 12th, 1829.

The church with other parishioners who had protested against the proceedings of the parish and against the jurisdiction of the *ex parte* Council, together with other aggrieved members of the society, considering Dr. H. as still their pastor, and knowing that he was ready to perform any duties pertaining to his pastoral office, were disposed to meet together with one accord, in one place, for an observance of the appropriate duties of the Lord's day. Their disposition and desire being made known to their pastor, with information that they would assemble at the old court house on the ensuing Sabbath, at the usual time of divine service; their pastor met them there, accordingly, and performed the service to a full, attentive, and solemn assembly.

In the mean time, the church, with the pastor, had convoked an advisory Council.

RESULT OF COUNCIL.

An Ecclesiastical Council was convened at the Old Court house in Cambridge, June 17, 1829, by letters missive from the pastor and first church of Christ in Cambridge, to give them advice and counsel in their peculiar and trying circumstances—were present from the Second church in Newton—Rev. *William Greenough*, pastor,

Br. *James Fuller*, delegate.

Second Presb'n ch. in Newburyport—Rev. *Daniel Dana*, D. D. pastor.

Church in Bedford—Rev. *Samuel Stearns*, pastor,

Dea. *Michael Crosby*, delegate.

Church in Theol. Seminary Andover—Rev. *Moses Stuart*, pastor,

Br. *Samuel Farrar*, delegate.

Church in North Brookfield—Rev. *Thomas Snell*, D. D. pastor.

Third church in Salem—Rev. *Brown Emerson*, pastor,

Br. *Alfred Greenleaf*, delegate.

First church in Charlestown—Rev. *Warren Fay*, D. D. pastor,

Dea. *Isaac Warren*, delegate.

Church in Hadley—Rev. *John Woodbridge*, D. D. pastor,

Br. *Dudley Smith*, delegate.

South church in Dedham—Rev. *William Cogswell*, pastor,

Br. *Jacob Guild*, delegate.

Old South church, Boston—Rev. *B. B. Wisner*, D. D. pastor,

Br. *Samuel T. Armstrong*, dele.

The Council was organized by choosing the Rev. William Greenough, Moderator, Rev. Warren Fay, Scribe, and Rev. William Cogswell, Assistant Scribe. The Council were then led in prayer by the Moderator.

The Rev. Dr. Holmes and a committee of the church presented the papers and communications which had passed between Dr. Holmes, the church, and the first parish in Cambridge. Having heard these papers and documents, and other statements and evidence, after some deliberation and the appointment of a committee to report the subjects which demand the special consideration of this Council,—Voted, to adjourn to 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

June 18th. Met according to adjournment, and the meeting was opened with prayer by the Rev. Dr. Dana.

The committee appointed yesterday made their report;—the subjects which were presented relating to Dr. Holmes, and the first church and parish in Cambridge, were taken up, and fully and deliberately considered by the Council; after which they unanimously came to the following Result:

It appears to this Council upon satisfactory evidence, that when the Rev. Dr. Holmes became the pastor and minister of the first church and parish in Cambridge, his known and avowed religious sentiments were those usually denominated orthodox, and that he was settled by the church and society, in view of this fact, with great unanimity;—and also that he has continued, down to the present time, to cherish and to present the same religious views which he professed at the time of his settlement;—and has performed his duties as pastor and minister of the first church and parish in Cambridge with a good degree of fidelity.

It also appears to this Council, that when Dr. Holmes settled in Cambridge, it was without any engagement, expressed or implied, to exchange with Unitarians.

There were very few, if any, Congregational ministers in Massachusetts, who were known and avowed Unitarians at the time of his settlement: It could not be expected, therefore, that any such pledge should be demanded or given. The fact, that Dr. Holmes declines exchanging with known Unitarian ministers, is therefore no violation of his pastoral engagements. Though Dr. Holmes does not now exchange with all those with whom he may have formerly exchanged, this by no means proves a change in the principles of Dr. Holmes. If it can be shown, as we fully believe it can, that those gentlemen with whom he has discontinued exchanges, have themselves changed in the *developement* of their principles, if not in regard to the principles themselves, since the time of Dr. Holmes's settlement; then consistency and uniformity on his part seem to demand that he should discontinue his ministerial intercourse with them. That Dr. Holmes does not deviate from the practice of his predecessors in not interchanging with Unitarians, is obvious from the fact, that in their day there were not known to be any Congregational ministers in the Commonwealth openly and avowedly Unitarian in sentiment. This Council here feel constrained to declare their full conviction, that no minister of the Gospel can consent to have his ministerial exchanges controlled by others, without a relinquishment of his inalienable rights, and the sacrifice of a good conscience.

It further appears to this Council, that Dr. Holmes is justifiable in refusing to comply with the demand of the parish "to reject Dr. Watts's Psalms and Hymns, now in the meeting house, and to substitute therefore the Collection of Psalms and Hymns now used in the Chapel of Harvard University; to discontinue the public evening lectures in the meeting house of said parish, and in said parish, by clergymen of the Calvinistic denomination; to discontinue his exchanges with clergymen of said denomination; and in case he shall not comply, to ask a dismission from the office of pastor of said church." Demands of such a nature could not be complied with by any minister of the Gospel, professing the principles of Dr. Holmes, consistently with his duty, or with a regard to the best interests of his people.

It is further apparent, that Dr. Holmes, in his correspondence with a committee of the parish, has not refused a mutual Council, to be summoned according to the scriptural rights and general usage of the Congregational churches in this Commonwealth; but, on the contrary, he has repeatedly offered to unite in the calling of such a Council. Both he and the church distinctly stated to the parish committee, that they conceded to them the privilege of designating *one half* the members of such Council.

In view of all the facts and evidence presented to this Council, they are unanimously of the opinion, that the Rev. Dr. Holmes has not in any way forfeited his office as pastor of the first church and parish in Cambridge; and that he is still, according to ecclesiastical usage, the pastor and minister of said church and parish.

It may be proper for this Council further to state, that, in their opinion, the first church in Cambridge in claiming to be recognized in the convocation of a Council to advise with regard to measures deeply interesting to *them*, and tending to the dismission of their pastor, have claimed only their right, and what a due regard to the cause of their Divine Master would induce them to claim.

This Council deeply sympathize with this ancient and beloved church, and with their venerated pastor, in that they are for the present exiled from the sanctuary and the altar where they and their fathers have worshipped; and the pastor, after having performed the duties of the ministry here for almost forty years, now declared by the parish to be no longer their minister; and this without any assignable cause, excepting his preaching and causing to be preached to his people, that Gospel of Jesus Christ, which his predecessors preached, and which he believed and preached, when he entered on the ministry in this place. The Council cannot fail to commend the christian forbearance and kindness, and firmness and decision, which have marked the proceedings of the church and its pastor during the extraordinary measures which the parish have adopted to turn away the latter from the conscientious discharge of his duty, and to take from the church both its ecclesiastical rights and its beloved pastor and guide.

As Dr. Holmes is still, according to ecclesiastical usage, the pastor and minister of the first church and parish in Cambridge; and as the parish has by its votes excluded him from his pulpit, the Council approve the course pursued by him in continuing to perform parochial duties wherever and to whomsoever he may have opportunity; and advise him, and the church, and other friends of truth, "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together;" but to maintain divine

worship and the celebration of divine ordinances. The church, we doubt not, with its pastor, will take all suitable measures to promote its purity and spirituality, to maintain its rights, and to preserve its unity in the faith and order of the gospel. Instead of discouragement, the church, its pastor, and the friends of truth in this place, have abundant reason to be greatly encouraged, and to hold on their way, with strong expectation, that the blessing of Heaven will attend their efforts and sacrifices, that the Spirit will be poured out from on high, and the word of God have free course and be glorified in the midst of them. They should remember, that while they are now a spectacle to men, they are acting not only for themselves, but for the cause of truth; for which the learned and godly Shepard, the first pastor of this church, labored so abundantly; on account of whose "vigilance in detecting, and zeal in opposing the errors of the day,—and his enlightening and powerful ministry, when the foundation of a college was to be laid, Cambridge, rather than any other place, was pitched upon to be the seat of that happy Seminary."

The pastor and the church may be assured, that they will have the prayers, the sympathy, and the co-operation of the friends of evangelical truth as extensively as their peculiar circumstances are known. Let them, then, be of good courage, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, hold on their course, and their path shall become brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

Voted unanimously.

W. GREENOUGH, Moderator.

Attest. WARREN FAY, Scribe.

WILLIAM COGSWELL, Assist. Scribe.

This Result of Council was communicated to the church, at a notified meeting on the evening of the ensuing Sabbath, June 25; when the church

Voted, unanimously, That the Result of the Council, called by the church and its pastor, on the 17th inst. meets its approbation, and that the counsel and advice therein contained will be, by divine aid, religiously followed.

Divine service has accordingly been held statedly by the pastor and church, with a respectable number of the society, since their exclusion from the place of their accustomed worship. The whole number of members belonging to the first church in Cambridge is about ninety. Of these, full two thirds have followed their venerable pastor, and still continue to attend upon his ministry. The number of male members in the church is twenty one. Of these, fifteen have been the uniform friends and supporters of Dr. Holmes, and only two have taken an active part in the measures adopted by the parish to effect his dismissal. Of the whole number who usually worshipped in the meeting house previous to the separation, about one half have withdrawn, and statedly worship with the church and the pastor.

APPENDIX.

The following letter from those individuals of the church who still worship in the meeting house, will show the course which has been adopted there.

At a meeting of the church of the first parish in Cambridge, being the first church in Cambridge, on the twelfth day of July, A. D. 1829, by adjournment of the meeting of said church duly notified and held, at the meeting house of said parish, on the 28th day of June last past—

Whereas the first parish in Cambridge, by vote, on the eighth day of June last past, pursuant to the previous result of the Ecclesiastical Council mentioned in that vote, dismissed the Rev. Dr. Abiel Holmes from his office of minister of the Gospel and teacher of piety, religion and morality in said parish, and dissolved all connexion between said Holmes, as such minister, or teacher, and said parish—

And whereas, since that day, said parish, by their committee duly appointed for the purpose, have employed preachers to supply the pulpit in the meeting house of said parish, who have, from that day to the present time, on every Sabbath, preached in that pulpit to the inhabitants of said parish, and numerous other persons, who have attended public worship there—

And whereas William Hilliard and James Munroe, who were the deacons of the church of said parish, before and at the time of said dismissal of said Holmes from his said office, as such minister, or teacher, as aforesaid, and divers other persons, who were at that time, members of said church, have wholly neglected to attend public worship in said meeting house with said parish, and to attend the meetings and the communion of said church there, and have adhered to said Holmes, as their minister, and have exclusively attended public worship in the Court-house, under the preaching of said Holmes and other ministers there, and have had the sacrament of the Lord's supper administered there by said Holmes, and said Hilliard and Munroe have acted as deacons at the administration thereof there, and wholly neglected the church of said parish and left it destitute of deacons to perform the usual and customary duties of that office in said church; which said conduct of said Hilliard and Munroe, in relation to said church, amounts either to a legal abandonment and abdication of their said offices of deacons of said church, or at least, to a sufficient legal cause for dismissing them from their said offices.—

And whereas, it is necessary, under existing circumstances, to have a deacon or deacons, a moderator and a clerk or scribe in said church; in the facts above recited, said church consider it not only

their right but also their duty at this time, to pass the following votes, to wit.—

Voted,—As said William Hilliard and James Munroe have separated themselves as above stated from said church, and abdicated or abandoned their offices as deacons therein, and left said church destitute of a deacon, that said Hilliard and Munroe, severally be removed and dismissed from his office of deacon of said church, if the above stated facts do not amount in law to a legal abdication or abandonment of said office of deacon; and that the office of deacon in said church is now vacant, and that it is expedient and necessary now to elect a deacon or deacons thereof.

Voted,—To elect by ballot.

Voted,—That Abel Whitney be a deacon of said church.

Voted,—That Sylvanus Plympton be the clerk or scribe of said church.

Voted,—That the clerk, or scribe of said church, be and he hereby is authorized and empowered to appoint, notify and call the meetings of said church, whenever it shall be necessary or expedient.

Voted,—That the said Sylvanus Plympton, the clerk or scribe of said church, be authorized and required to transmit to said William Hilliard and James Munroe, an attested copy of the record of the foregoing votes, and of the foregoing recitals introductory to said votes.

A true copy. Attest.

SYLVANUS PLYMPTON, Clerk of said Church.

Cambridge, July 15, 1829.

REPLY TO THE ABOVE.

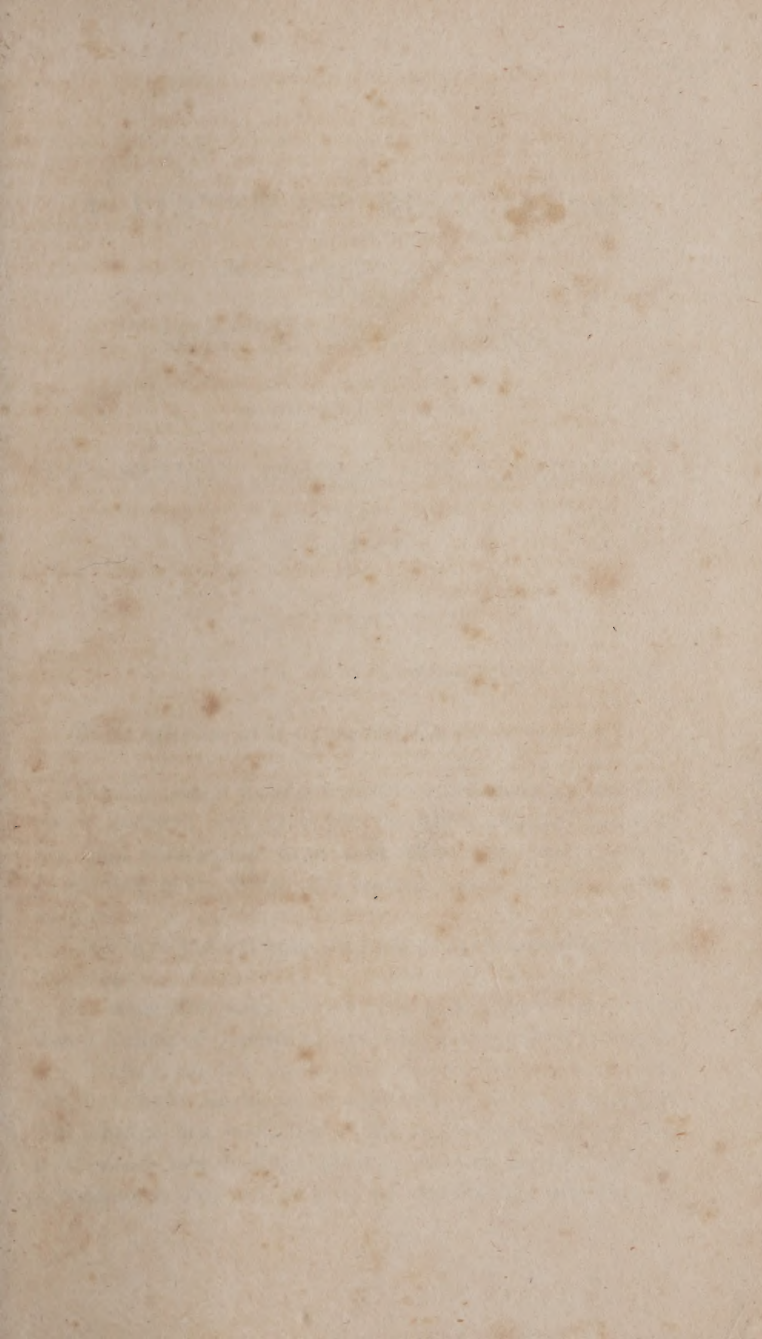
Cambridge, July 21, 1829.

Sir,—We received yours of the 15th inst. on Sunday, at nine o'clock, A. M., in which you give the proceedings of what you style the first church in Cambridge, adopted by them on the 12th inst. We had previously supposed, that in all cases, where an individual, or individuals, were accused of any misdemeanor, or mal-practice, that the allegations, upon which the complaint was founded, would be made known to the party accused, that they might have an opportunity to answer, and show cause, if any they had, why judgment should not be had, and sentence pronounced. But, as in the present case, this course has not been adopted, and as we deny altogether the right of the body, which you represent, proceeding to exercise this their supposed authority, we deem it inexpedient to take any farther notice of your communication at this time.

Yours, &c.

WILLIAM HILLIARD, } Deacons of the
JAMES MUNROE, } First Church in Cambridge.

TO DR. SYLVANUS PLYMPTON.





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A LETTER OF RESIGNATION,

AND HIS REASONS THEREFOR, OF

from
is
REV. A. W. STEVENS,

OF HIS PASTORATE IN THE

LEE-STREET CHURCH, IN CAMBRIDGE,

JUNE 7, 1870.

CAMBRIDGE, June 7, 1870.

To the Members of the Lee-street Church in Cambridge:

I hereby resign to you my office as Minister of the Lee-street Society; and give you the three months' notice of my final withdrawal from said office (on the seventh of September next), which the mutual terms of our contract require.

I feel it incumbent upon me to state my reasons for taking this step.

For somewhat more than a year past, I have been aware that a feeling of opposition existed, on the part of some in the Society, to the theological views which I hold, and which I have made no concealment of in my preaching. The charge has been that I am a Radical. Those who entertained this feeling called a private meeting of my parishioners, for the purpose of considering whether, on

account of my Radicalism, I should not be asked to resign. This meeting was held Sunday evening, Dec. 27, 1868. No final action, however, was then taken, the feeling of disaffection not being pronounced and strong enough to warrant it. Another and public meeting was therefore called, which took place on Sunday evening, Jan. 17, 1869. At this meeting, which was a large one, the whole subject of my opinions, and of my relations to the Society, was fully discussed. The final result of it all was the introduction and passage of the following resolutions:—

“1. *Resolved*, By the members of the Lee-street Society, that the occupant of its pulpit shall have freedom of speech to express the freedom of thought which God has given him.

“2. *Resolved*, That, in the present crisis of affairs in this Society, we pledge our hearty and zealous support to our pastor (Rev. A. W. Stevens), and hereby express our earnest determination that our present relations shall remain undisturbed.”

The first of these resolutions was passed unanimously. The second was passed by the large majority of thirty-four to six. They were communicated to me officially, by the vote of the meeting.

I regarded the result of this meeting as so decided an expression of approbation of my ministry, that I felt I should do wrong not to heed it and remain in my place. I did remain, and took my stand upon the resolutions of the Society, which acknowledged so emphatically my freedom to utter my honest convictions.

In consequence of the action of the meeting, a few of the discontented ones honorably withdrew from the Society, preferring such a course to remaining to carry on the contest against principles so pronounced, and to oppose and harass the majority. I trusted, then, that thenceforward the will of the majority might be respected, and that we might go on together harmoniously; not for a moment supposing that the resolutions did not mean *all* they said, or that those

who voted for them did not do so with a clear understanding of their import.

But a few months elapsed, however, before it began to be evident that whatever element of discontent was latent in the Society was being sedulously and quietly fostered by such as remained of the former disaffected ones. Notwithstanding this, I pursued my course in the spirit of candor and sincerity; withholding nothing which I felt it my duty to declare, but endeavoring always—as I previously had done—to speak the truth in love, and to do my whole work well and faithfully. Occasionally, during this time, a family dropped off from the Society, but other persons and families came in to make the places of the retiring good. I had every reason to believe that I still had the approval of a decided majority of the actual members of the Society; and so long as I could reasonably believe this to be the case, for their sake and the sake of the principle dear to them and myself, I determined to persevere to maintain my position. At the same time, I felt perfectly willing—and took occasion more than once so to express myself to such as addressed me on the subject—to have the matter referred at any time again to a fair vote of the Society, and to abide by such decision.

The opposition, still remaining in the Society, continued their work of spreading the element of disaffection. The result was that some, who had voted with apparent heartiness for the foregoing resolutions of approval, changed their friendliness to my ministry into one of antagonism. And now the ground of former opposition began in part to be shifted, from objection to my Radicalism, to the assertion that the financial and “social” success of the Society was diminishing. To this my friends and myself could only reply, that we were willing to bear our full share of the pecuniary sacrifices necessary to be made for our principle; and that, if the rich and influential were forsaking us, the

so-called "common people," at least, were coming, in never so great numbers, to hear our gospel gladly. I for one could not, and can never, recognize mere financial and "social" success as the true criterion of the character and results of my ministry.

At the annual parish meeting in April last, I had hoped this whole subject would be fairly and fully discussed, and definitely acted upon. It was a matter of surprise to me that the opposition did not attempt any demonstration of their strength at that meeting, when they had a good and sufficient opportunity to do so. It was still more a matter of surprise to me, that, *after* the meeting, they claimed to be in a majority, and to have had no fair opportunity to prove it.

It was then agreed upon by my friends—in the pure spirit of fairness and equity—that *they* should call a parish meeting, for the especial purpose of giving to the opposition an unmistakable chance to speak their mind and execute their purpose. And, inasmuch as some very gross misrepresentations of my opinions and actions had been made by the opposition,—which, it was well known, *I* had never had any adequate opportunity to confront and confute,—it was further agreed by my friends to invite me to be present at such a meeting, and hear and reply to any statements then made by the opposition.

My friends called such a meeting, in the approved legal manner. The warrant, issued by the clerk, contained four articles, as follows : —

- "1. To choose a Moderator for said meeting.
- "2. To give to any members of the Parish, who may desire a change in the Pastorate, an opportunity to publicly state their reasons therefor.
- "3. To give the Pastor (Rev. A. W. Stevens) an opportunity to hear and reply to any such statements.
- "4. To definitely determine whether any change in the Pastorate is really desired by the Parish, by a vote to be taken at said meeting."

The meeting took place on the evening of June 6. The first article of the warrant was acted upon. The other three were not definitely acted upon; and the meeting was adjourned six weeks, — the entire opposition with others voting for such adjournment.

The express object of the meeting, therefore, was not attained. I got no accurate, official evidence that a majority of the Society desired any change in the Pastorate. But I did get this, — a new and astonishing revelation of the *animus* of the opposition. They had prepared for the meeting by obtaining the votes of several persons who had some time since withdrawn from all practical and real relations with our Society, and been in attendance upon worship at some other church. These, and other persons secured in a manner well-nigh as unworthy, appeared within a few moments of the time of calling the meeting to order, and made themselves members of our Society, for the sole and express purpose of voting against my continuance as its minister.

Now my experience and observation at that meeting lead me to form these conclusions: —

I believe, that, if at the meeting the vote had been taken directly upon the question of my remaining or not remaining in the Pastorate, my supporters would have proved themselves to be in the majority; for I believe that the opposition would have been willing to meet such a vote, had they been conscious of possessing the requisite strength to carry it. But the opposition, by their proceedings in the meeting, have now shown, as never before, not only their *animus*, but also what they are capable of doing, *or allowing to be done*, in order to accomplish their purpose. I am not willing, under these circumstances, longer to continue to invite the support of my friends; and thus to lay upon them the necessity of continuing a contest, in which, if they would be successful, they must at least be tempted to follow the unworthy example of their opponents. For this,

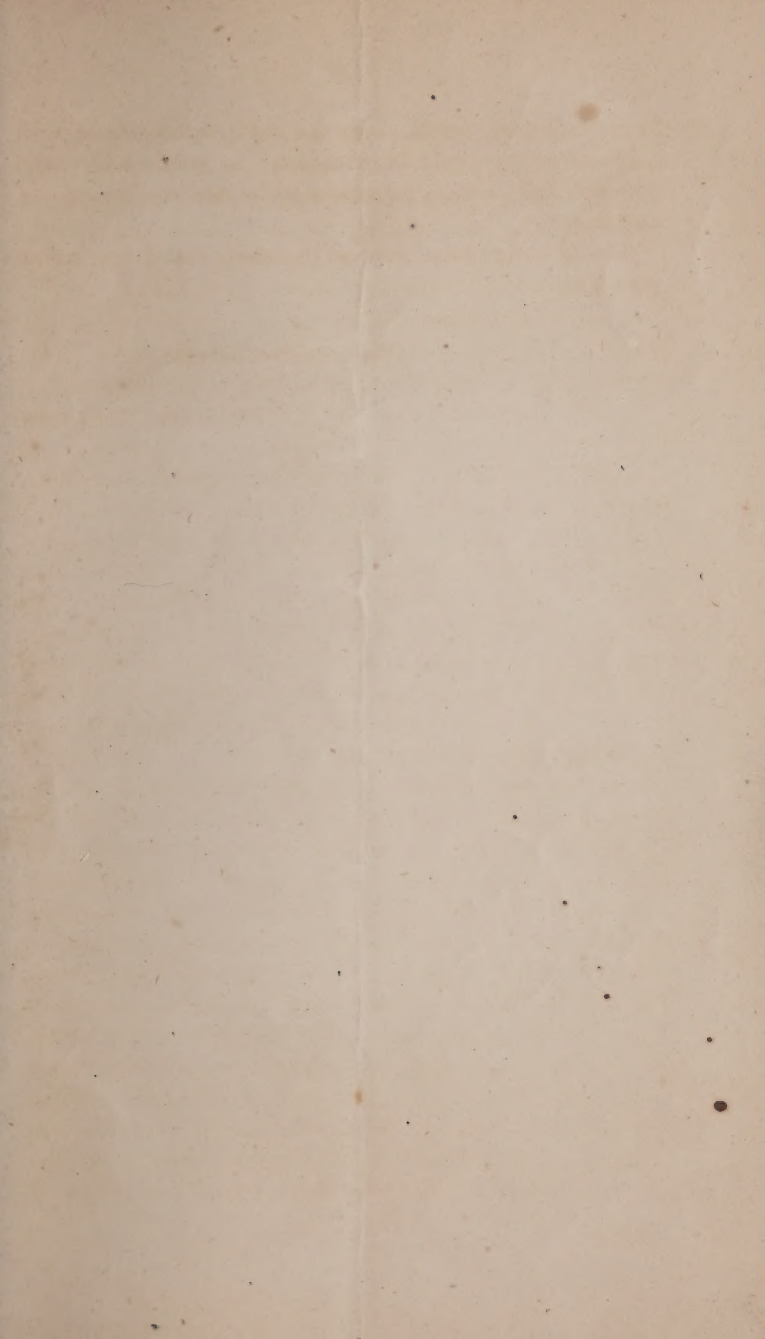
in my judgment, would cause the strife to become of such a character as would be exhaustive to good temper and patience, and fearfully demoralizing to intellect, conscience, and soul.

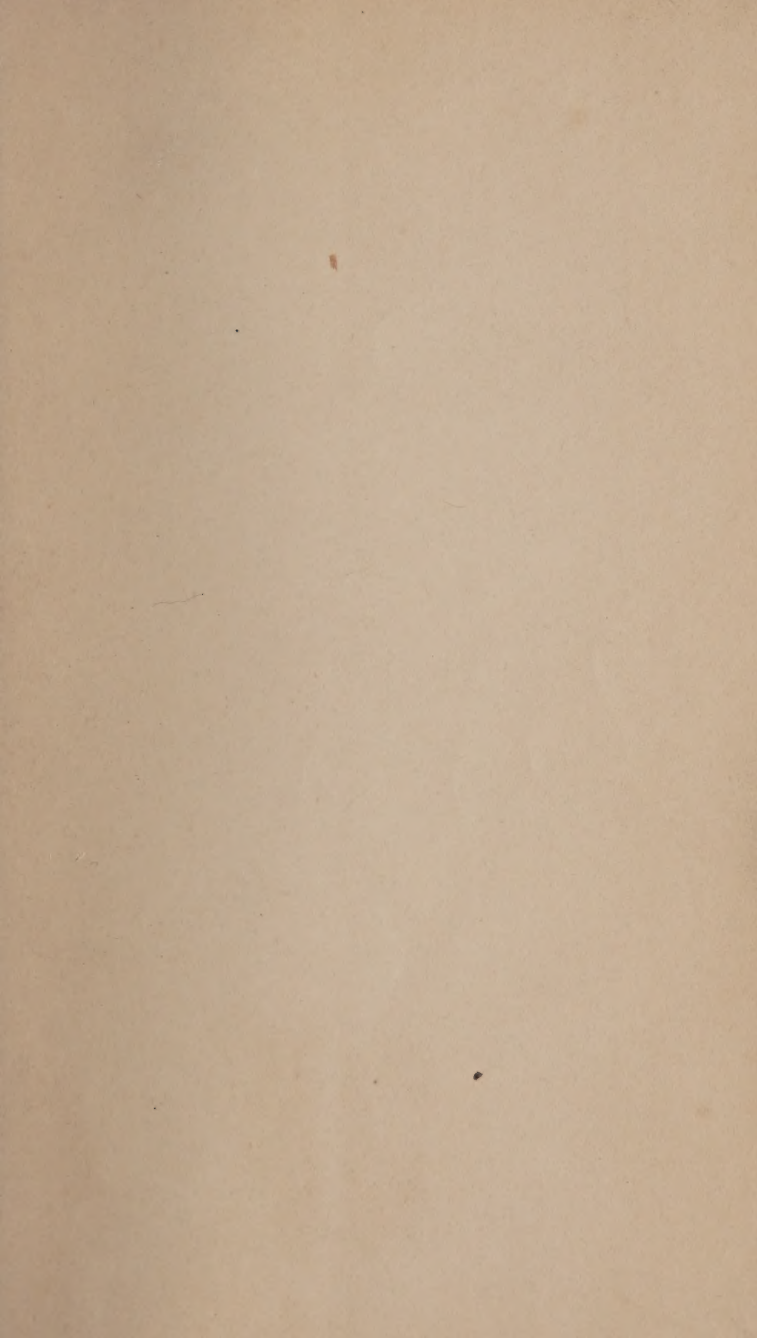
And it is for these reasons, therefore, that I now resign my office.

I am

Your obedient servant,

A. W. STEVENS.





7/30 6 days

(Dec., 1888, 20,000)

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